



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

Mr. Greg Brkich, Chair
Arm River

Mr. Doyle Vermette, Deputy Chair
Cumberland

Ms. Nancy Heppner
Martensville-Warman

Ms. Lisa Lambert
Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood

Mr. Eric Olauson
Saskatoon University

Mr. Doug Steele
Cypress Hills

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

[The committee met at 18:30.]

The Chair: — I want to welcome everybody to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. I am the Chair, Greg Brkich. Doyle Vermette is Deputy Chair. Members are Nancy Heppner, Lisa Lambert, Eric Olauson, Doug Steele, Warren Steinley. We do have a substitution for Doyle Vermette of Nicole Sarauer.

We have one document to table. IAJ 5-28, Ministry of Justice: Responses to questions raised at the June 13, 2016 meeting.

**General Revenue Fund
Justice
Vote 3**

Subvote (JU01)

The Chair: — This evening the committee will be considering the estimates and supplementary estimates for the Ministry of Justice. We will begin with vote 3, Justice, central management and services, subvote (JU01). Minister Wyant is here with his officials. I will ask the minister to introduce your officials and make any opening comments. And I'll just make one. As officials come up to use the mic, they can just say their name for the first time just for *Hansard*. They just have to do it the first time. Any questions? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh sorry, sorry. Opening comments, Mr. Wyant.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and committee members. Well good evening. I'm pleased to be here on behalf of the Ministry of Justice to provide the highlights of the 2017-18 financial plan and to answer any questions that committee members have.

I'm joined by a number of members from the Ministry of Justice today, and I want to thank them for sharing their evening with us. I don't think there's any hockey games that anybody's missing. Mr. Chair, so probably had nothing better to do. So I really want to thank them very much for their very, very hard work. They certainly make the ministry look good every day. So thanks for being here.

At the table with me, Mr. Chair, are Glen Gardner, deputy minister of Justice and deputy attorney general; and to my right, Dale McFee, deputy minister of Corrections and Policing. And as you mentioned, there'll be a number of other ministry officials that can introduce themselves as they come up.

Mr. Chair, our plan and budget continues to focus on meeting the challenge by finding the right balance between addressing the deficit and ensuring that Saskatchewan people continue to have the programs, services, and infrastructure that they need. We're meeting this challenge by promoting public safety and well-being in our communities, supporting and protecting people in vulnerable circumstances, and improving access to justice for Saskatchewan citizens.

We're focused on finding innovative strategies to reduce the demand on the justice system while ensuring access to justice is understandable, timely, and affordable for Saskatchewan citizens. Community safety, Mr. Chair, and well-being is a

significant priority for our ministry. By focusing on targeted policing and community safety initiatives, we will continue to work to make Saskatchewan communities safe for everyone.

As part of the 2017-18 budget, the ministry has received a million dollars to address the recommendations that will be made by the caucus committee on crime reduction. At the same time, we would begin to implement a set of interventions designed to reduce the length of time spent by individuals on remand in correctional facilities. These individuals account for a significant use of resources and many can be dealt with in a much more effective and productive way. This is supported by new funding of approximately \$1.5 million in this budget.

We will also continue to make investments in both physical and IT [information technology] infrastructure. We'll continue to integrate and provide operational support for the ministry's integrated justice information management systems. We will also continue to enhance the security features in our correctional facilities and replace the kitchen at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre. This 2017-18 budget and the ministry plan will enable us to continue to work collaboratively with our partners to support victims of crime and those individuals in vulnerable circumstances.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge that the ministry underwent a restructuring recently that is reflected in the 2017-18 Estimates book. This resulted in some name changes, restatements, and transfer of programs within the ministry's estimate book structure. These changes were targeted at increasing effectiveness and had no effect on the ministry's final budget numbers for '17-18.

Mr. Chair, with that in mind, I just wanted to go through a little bit of the restructuring that happened and some of the effects that it had on the Estimates book. And as I mentioned before, the internal restructuring is not going to negatively impact service or program delivery. The 2016-17 budget numbers in the estimate books have been restated, as I've mentioned, to reflect the ministry structure.

So there was restatements associated with the subvote on central management and services. The public registry assurance claims, which are statutory, has been restated from this subvote to the innovation and legal services. The subvote for community safety outcomes has been eliminated, and some of its functions were restated into the central services within that subvote.

Central services was restated for an increase of \$807,000 and nine FTEs [full-time equivalent].

The restatements associated with the subvote on courts and civil justice. The allocation for Public Guardian and Trustee had been renamed Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee and has been restated in this subvote to boards, commissions, and independent offices. That was \$3.304 million and 42.2 FTEs.

The restatements associated with subvote on innovation and legal services. The former subvote on innovation, legal, and policy services has been renamed innovation and legal services. The public registry assurance claims, which are statutory, has

been restated from central management and services to this particular subvote. And the Queen's Printer Revolving Fund, the subsidy has been renamed the Publications Saskatchewan Revolving Fund.

There were restatements associated with the subvote on community safety and well-being. The community justice subvote has been renamed community safety and well-being. The former subvote community safety outcomes has been eliminated and some of its functions were restated into various allocations within this subvote.

Strategic systems and innovation for \$1.182 million and nine FTEs; research and evidence-based excellence, \$1.444 million and five FTEs; and program support at \$1.875 million and 10 FTEs.

There were restatements associated with the subvotes for boards, commissions, and independent offices. The subvote on boards and commissions has been renamed boards, commissions, and independent offices. The allocation for coroners has been renamed Office of the Chief Coroner and has been restated from community justice to this subvote at \$3.182 million and 15.8 FTEs.

The allocation of Public Guardian and Trustee has been renamed Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee and has been restated from courts and civil justice to this subvote at \$3.304 million and 42.2 FTEs. There was a restatement associated with the former subvote for community justice. The community justice subvote has been renamed community safety and well-being. The allocation for coroners has been renamed Office of the Chief Coroner and has been restated from this subvote to boards, commissions, and independent officers.

There was restatements associated with the former subvote of community safety outcomes. The subvote for community safety outcomes is eliminated and the functions are restated into various allocations within the subvote of community safety and well-being, and central services within central management and the services subvote.

So in closing, Mr. Chair, the Ministry of Justice does play a key role in our province, and while we're proud of our accomplishments over the past year, we recognize there is still work to be done. We'll continue to collaborate with our government and community partners to achieve greater success in the delivery of programs and services, and the funding for the 2017-18 fiscal year will ensure the ministry continues to play this role for our government.

Mr. Chair, those are the highlights, and I'd now be pleased to answer any questions about our budget plan for the Ministry of Justice.

The Chair: — Just before we . . . I'll just say we're going to have a break at 8:30 for five minutes if that's all right with the committee. So we're here for four hours. Nicole.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I'd like to thank the minister for his opening remarks, his deputy ministers for being here this evening, and also the plethora of officials we have to back the three of you up this evening. I appreciate all of you braving the

second-winter weather tonight to be here.

I appreciate some of the preliminary discussions about the reorganizational work that had been done within the ministry. I'm going to dig into this a little bit more just so that I have a full understanding of what's moved where and just trying to follow the money. So some of this might be a repetition of some of the areas you've already touched on, Minister Wyant, but it's so that I have a strong understanding of what's happening in the ministry since we met a year ago.

And I'm going to start, just for ease of your reference, I'm just going to start walking through the line items in the subvotes in the budget. And I'm hoping you can give a bit of an explanation as to why some of the numbers have moved, and again, why some of the names have moved. And then I'll move on later to some more specific questions about other issues within the ministry.

So to start, I'm looking at the subvote central management and services, which is the first one. There was a significant decline in funding for the central services line item. I was wondering if you could expand a bit on what happened there.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks. The decrease in the central services was due to the transfer to the ministry's IT funding to strategic systems and innovation. And that's where the rest of the ministry's IT and IM [information management] functions reside. So that there was \$11.8 million transferred. There was a net zero financial impact. That's where that comes from.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. So there . . . so for my clarification, what still falls under that line item?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Within that vote, there's corporate services, mail, communications. There's the ITO [information technology office] levy, corporate initiatives, performance and planning. I'm sorry. There's corporate services. There's mail. There's communications. There's corporate initiatives, performance and planning, and strategic portfolio and fiscal planning.

So you'll notice the reduction between, a substantial reduction, on the removing of the ITO levy that came out of the difference between this budget and last year's budget.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for that clarification. Moving on to courts and civil justice, I think it's the third subvote. Court services sees a decline this budget by just over \$600,000. Could you expand on where you're planning on seeing that decline in funding?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The court services, as you'll see, had a net decrease that's mainly due to the annualization of the decisions such as the changes made to the perimeter court screening and the Weyburn Queen's Bench registry service. So there's a \$605,000 net decrease.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So from what I understand from our previous discussion of the Weyburn Court House, you anticipated seeing a savings of \$100,000. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It was \$108,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you expand a bit on that, the other item that you had spoken about just before you were talking about Weyburn Court House? I missed the details around that.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It was \$308,000 for the perimeter screening.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So you're talking about the deputy sheriffs. Is that what you're . . . Is that what you mean?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's right.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. I want to go into that issue a little bit later. But just while we're on it, I'm assuming that there is a plan in the future for some of those positions to be contracted out. Is that correct?

[18:45]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — In the beginning of January we entered into an agreement with the Corps of Commissionaires to provide commissionaire services, but there's still two deputy sheriffs in those locations pending the outcome of the occupational health and safety complaint.

Ms. Sarauer: — All right. What line item are you anticipating the funding for that contract to come out of? Will it be from here?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It's all part of court services.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Have you anticipated yet how much that cost is going to be?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It's approximately \$525,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so that's coming out of this line item as well. And you have already told me where the \$600,000 is being lost. I'm wondering where that \$500,000 is going to be met out of this line item.

Ms. Bihun: — Glennis Bihun. So you see all of the dollars within that line item. With the reduction in the deputy sheriff's salary dollars, there was a reduction of about \$833,000. Because the commissionaires are a contractual arrangement, you see that come into the operating dollars for an increase of 525,000 in the operating, a net savings of \$308,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so that's how you're getting to the 605,000. It's the 308,000 plus the 108,000 that you're also saving from the Weyburn Court House. So that's roughly 400,000.

Ms. Bihun: — There are some additional areas and some that take us to the exact math of the 605,000. I'll just flip pages to come to that.

So the 605,000 in its entirety is made up as follows: there were additional resources to manage the newly implemented integrated justice information management system — and I'll just flip to what that amount was while we're there — and that was an increase of 318,000. The annualization of the perimeter court screening that we talked about for 308,000. The

annualization of the Weyburn Queen's Bench registry service for 108,000.

There was the transfer of the responsibility of the CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.] grant to corporate initiatives, so simply a move out of court services' budget into a different area of the ministry. No reduction in the grant itself to CLASSIC.

There's 7,000 for the expanded use of electronic tickets, so the more use of electronic tickets the fewer tickets to be printed, and then there are remaining savings made up of a combination of other efficiencies from throughout the court system.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Could you expand on the combination of other efficiencies that you mentioned through the court system?

Ms. Bihun: — So those are a number of examples that we're looking at right now which involve some consultations with the courts on things like monitoring the number of appearances, looking at how we can expand the use of video conferencing or technology for perhaps the reduction of court parties' travel, reduction of prisoner transport costs. We're also undertaking a review of the effectiveness of the what's now five-year-old enforcement of money judgement legislation. And those would be some examples of other efficiencies.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there a targeted dollar value that you're trying to find in that area?

Ms. Bihun: — Yes, the total of those efficiencies is around 400,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. I just note that the last . . . This year's budget is seeing a reduction in 600,000 while last year the estimates were higher than that. It was 33.4 million, and then we came back again in supplemental estimates for another 1.8 million on this line item. So I worry that . . . And then in 2015-2016 the actuals on this item was 35.6 million. And I understand that things move around a bit, but I worry that we're going to be coming back again for supplementals on this line item again.

Moving on. And thank you for the detailed explanation of that line item. I noticed that dispute resolution also saw a reduction in its funding by \$254,000. Could you expand on that as well?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sure. That decrease was due to the partial expiration of funding for the Family Matters program. It's not going to affect the program delivery, but that was where that decrease came from, as a result of the partial expiration of the funding.

Ms. Sarauer: — Family Matters is funded by the Law Foundation, is it not? So can you explain what you're . . . Maybe I'm not understanding what you're saying.

Mr. McNabb: — It's Lionel McNabb. We received \$1.3 million from the Law Foundation for three years. The program was a little slow getting going the first year and then we used more in-kind and managed the money very carefully, so we hadn't nearly used the \$1.3 million. We went back to the Law

Foundation, who is very supportive of this program because it keeps people out of court and keeps family out of conflict, and said, we're not going to use all the money. Would you extend it for another year? They agreed to that, but as part of that there was \$245,000 that we did not need. So it's just money that we didn't get from the Law Foundation.

Ms. Sarauer: — So it's the money from the Law Foundation is being used for this dispute resolution line item then?

Mr. McNabb: — Yes. We put 1.3 in, sort of amortized over the years, and then we did not need 245,000 or that 245,000 which is money we didn't get from the Law Foundation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I just understood Family Matters to be a project separate and apart from the dispute resolution office and government dispute resolution initiatives, so I'm actually quite surprised to hear that they've sort of married with each other in government budgets.

Mr. McNabb: — And some of it is, in order to pay our employees and the contractors we . . . To make it simple, you house it in a branch and then you can pay the bills. So it's tracked separately in the budget but it is housed in a branch just so we can track the money.

Ms. Sarauer: — So this money is going to pay for employees both that work within the Family Matters program as well as employees that work in the dispute resolution office?

Mr. McNabb: — There are designated employees that work for strictly Family Matters. We have some contractors that we use. Sometimes we bring somebody in at half-time and that gets paid out of that. And then, although the in-kind where government contributed to the funding, we've at least matched the total that we got from the Law Foundation.

Ms. Sarauer: — And all of that is seen in this line item, is that correct?

My apologies, I have to go a step back again. I forgot to ask when we were speaking about the deputy sheriffs, you had mentioned that there is an OH & S [occupational health and safety] complaint. I was wondering if you could expand on that.

Ms. Bihun: — So in January, the Ministry of Justice did receive an occupational health and safety concern from deputy sheriffs in . . . a deputy sheriff in Prince Albert, a deputy sheriff in Regina. Our response to the occupational health and safety concern remains in the works, if you will. We'll be responding to OH & S by the end of April, so the end of this week, in the near future. And that's why during this time we've been committed and will continue to have two deputy sheriffs along with two commissionaires working at each of the screening points.

Ms. Sarauer: — So did this result in some of . . . Because I understand that many of the deputy sheriffs had layoff notices that were effective December . . . the end of December, I believe. Did that extend some of their employment then as a result?

Ms. Bihun: — Those announcements in regard to the layoffs

were effective at the end of December. So no, it did not effect any changes in that regard. Having said that, as other backfills or other vacancies have arisen, some deputy sheriffs have certainly rejoined the organization in the positions that they were trained to do.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. And then just to clarify, you had mentioned the contract for the new deputy sheriffs. Can you remind me what state you're at in terms of having that contract be finalized and moved along?

Ms. Bihun: — So the contract with the Corps of Commissionaires was implemented with standing orders at the beginning of January. So when the deputy sheriff positions were ended, the commissionaires started their work with us in the beginning of January. So that was a contract that we were able to put specific orders into, and in the process that the Ministry of Central Services has had a contract with the Corps of Commissionaires for providing like services and some security services for other portions of government's business throughout the province. So we studied and built in specific standing orders for the actual perimeter screening function with the Ministry of Justice that started in January.

Ms. Sarauer: — Did the number of staff at each court location perimeter screening point change after the implementation of this contract?

Ms. Bihun: — Yes. There were specific jobs that were abolished that were announced on November 1st and which resulted in 14 deputy sheriff positions being abolished in Regina, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and North Battleford. When those abolishments took place they weren't all encumbered positions, so some of those positions were fortunate enough to be vacancies and minimize the number of individuals who were reduced or impacted directly.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. But understanding that this contract and the new employees who are filling this contract are taking the spot of the positions of the individuals who had been terminated, I'm just curious to know if the number of commissionaires, guards, whatever you want to call them, has changed in each court location during any given day. For example — and I don't know the numbers; the ministry would know the numbers better than me — say there's three at all times at the Regina Queen's Bench Court House and then this contract . . . these individuals were laid off and this new contract started, I just want to know if that has changed, as an example?

Ms. Bihun: — So when the change was initially implemented, the concern . . . There was a deputy sheriff, a single deputy sheriff working with commissionaires at the perimeter screening points at those locations where there is perimeter screening. Following the raising of the return, we've re-established two deputy sheriff positions at the perimeter screening entrance points and we continue with two at the entrance points.

[19:00]

Ms. Sarauer: — I suppose this is a preliminary discussion. This is too preliminary because this is pending the outcome of

the OH & S decision.

Ms. Bihun: — Yes, it is. So I'm limited until our response is finalized.

Ms. Sarauer: — And just to be clear — and I'm not sure if this will probably also be impacted by that decision — are the new commissionaires armed?

Ms. Bihun: — No, they are not.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, appreciate that. Moving on to subvoted 4, and I think this is where we start to get into some of the reorganization. There was a decrease in funding to the innovation branch to the tune of about \$1.1 million, and I believe this is part of the shifting of what's going on. So you're going to have to walk me through this really slowly so I understand what's happened internally within the ministry, unless I'm wrong in what happened here in this line item.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The majority of that, well all of it was moved to the new, to the central management services. So that's where that transfer went. The balance of the \$370 is the amount for the ADM [assistant deputy minister] office. So that was transferred to Central Services. So the transfer of the strategic planning, program review and evaluation, and internal justice-related advice and analysis from there to central management and services. And that was \$1.157 million.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So the entire innovation branch in Justice has moved to Central Services?

Ms. Head: — Kylie Head. So everything has moved to a new central branch which is a combined — sorry, I've got a cold — a combined shop between what was the Attorney General side of the ministry and the Corrections and Policing side of the ministry. So part of that new office that has been created encompasses what was the innovation office or was part of this innovation office line previously. So as a result of that merger, all that's left here is just the ADM office, the ADM innovation office itself which is just myself, another lawyer, and a support person, and a small operating budget.

So the rest of the people who were part of that line item have been moved to a different branch in the ministry which is a branch that didn't exist previously. And it's a combined shop between Corrections and Policing and the Attorney General so that we can make sure that we have sort of an innovation perspective that goes across the entire ministry rather than it just being focused on the Attorney General.

Ms. Sarauer: — What is the new branch called and what is all encompassed in detail in that new branch?

Ms. Head: — So it's the corporate initiatives, performance and planning branch, and it's a merger of several other branches that existed in the ministry previously. So on the Corrections and Policing side of the ministry, we previously had a corporate services branch which was impacted. And on the Attorney General side we had the main branch, which is what you're thinking of, which was our main policy branch, which has been brought into this unit. There were a number of, a few isolated FTEs in other locations that were also brought into the unit, so

there were two that were taken from community justice and brought in, and there were four taken from the Corrections part of the ministry and brought into this new branch.

Mr. McFee: — Just to highlight on that, so if you can picture it as a continuum, there's been a reorg with CP [Corrections and Policing] and AG [Attorney General] to actually bring it into one umbrella, and that umbrella now looks across the sector. Before we had innovation in the Attorney General side going one way; then we had innovation in the CP not exactly going the same direction. So now it's all under one branch and it reports directly to both Deputy Minister Gardner and myself. So now what we have is the continuum. So Kylie's group now can look at all the policy from start to finish including implementation. So it's all under the same umbrella.

Ms. Sarauer: — Did this change result in a net loss of any dollars?

Ms. Head: — So actually from a budgeting perspective, this branch is better off than it used to be. We had a number of positions in the branch previously that weren't actually fully funded. They were just positions that were deemed necessary over the years, and they were never actually budgeted for properly through, you know, the normal budget process. And so we had positions there that had existed for 17, 15 years that had never been fully funded. And so what we would have to do is at the end of each year, kind of go around and beg and borrow from other parts of the ministry and take some leftover money from here and there and try to cobble together enough money to pay for this particular branch.

But as a result of pulling these four areas together, the ministry actually was able to move money around from one line item to another, so this branch is actually now fully funded, and so there's no deficit at the end of the year for salaries for this branch any longer.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you for that explanation. Based on what you just said it leads me to the conclusion that there are some FTEs that have been lost as a result of this. Can you tell me how many?

Ms. Head: — So in this budget year there was no FTE loss. However we have been looking for efficiencies in the out year, in the coming year. But for this particular budget there isn't any FTE loss.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So maybe just wrap my head around . . . and I don't know if you can do it by providing examples or what, by how you were able to fully fund this new branch when you were rolling in positions that hadn't been fully funded as you had indicated.

Mr. McFee: — So just to put this in the right context, so how this actually unfolded as we mentioned, as everything's put together now, there are three less positions going forward in '17-18 in this amalgamation, okay. So there's three less positions and with those three less positions, now there is no pressure because it's a fully funded organization. So now it's got the right budget amount but there is three less positions, as you . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so there have been three FTEs eliminated.

Mr. McFee: — Yes, that's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. I heard that within the ministry there was upwards of about 14 FTEs who've been eliminated since the beginning of March. Has there been some position terminations that have happened in other branches?

Mr. McFee: — There's seven positions in total, all out of the management, and there's no positions removed at the front-line impact.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you tell me in which branch each position fell under?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was one position in public law, three in corporate initiatives, one in policing, one in community services, and one in access and privacy.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. And similarly as we saw in the court services line item, that there is a need to find further efficiencies to meet the budgeting targets for this year. Is there a similar need to find further efficiencies to meet this year's budgeting targets?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well the simple answer would be no, although I could tell you that the ministry is always looking for more efficiencies within the delivery of the services that we provide. So the answer is no, but that we will continue to look for efficiencies within the ministry.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. So just so I understand, I don't want to dive too deep into the other branches, public law and civil law, but do they . . . has there been any changes in those branches as a result of this reorg that we've seen?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was just the one FTE reduction in public law.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Okay, let's try and dive into this whole community safety and well-being subvote that's been . . . I think it rolled in community justice and innovation, legal, and policy services, or it . . . No. It rolled in community justice and something else, community safety outcomes, from the last estimates, which has resulted in a bit of an aggressive fluctuation in numbers, so I'm sort of struggling to understand what's happening in this whole area now. So I'm hoping you can slowly walk me through it basically; you might as well just start by slowly walking me through this whole subvote.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Okay, all right. There was a decrease to community services, and you'll see that number at the top line. That was mainly due to the transfer of the funding responsibility of the transition houses program to the Victims' Fund, so there was a \$6.4 million decrease there without any impact to the services.

There was a net increase to the strategic systems and innovation, and that was mainly due to a transfer of the ministry's IT funding to this area, which manages the ministry's IT and IM functions. That was a \$13.6 million increase. There

was a transfer of access and privacy to the community safety and well-being subvote, and that merges the ministry's freedom of information functions with a net zero impact. There was a decrease to program support due to the transfer of funding to other allocations to better align budget with expenditures, and the restriction of traffic safety offences in the fine option program, which is a \$595,000 total decrease.

[19:15]

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you for that. Let's just start with the first line item and then we'll walk our way through the rest. Community services, you said mainly is because of the transfer for the transition house funding. Is there anything else that sees a decrease in this budget item, or anything that sees a decrease because I suppose that doesn't see a decrease?

Mr. Anderson: — Ron Anderson. Yes, some of them have been spoken to. They're mostly transfers between other areas to and fro. So the substantive change is the transition house transfer. Some of the transfers that were also referred to were the two positions that went over to the area that ADM Kylie Head just spoke about. And then there was a transfer between community services and strategic engagement. So it's just renaming and transfers within the branch and then some transfers over to the two items that Kylie had already spoke about. The substantive change there is the transition house to the victims services.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And then for strategic systems and innovations you said mainly it was the IT funding transfer. Is there anything else that's been transferred in that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was a transfer of 11.8 for 1 million, and one FTE from Central Services allocation to relocate the funding associated with the IT to where the ministry's IT management function resides. There was incremental funding of \$809,000 to address the transition costs associated with the newly implemented IJIMS [integrated justice information management system] system. There was incremental funding of \$630,000 for increased costs associated with the usage of IT in the ministry, and incremental funding of 396,000 and six FTEs to manage the newly implemented integrated justice, the IJIMS system, which was partially offset by a transfer of \$37,000 to other allocations to better align with the budget expenditures.

There was also a transfer of the ministry's \$8,000 payment for government geographic information system to another ministry.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, and then you had mentioned the decrease in funding for program support. Can you elaborate on that one? You had mentioned something about transferring, but I think I lost you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was a decrease of \$595,000 or 31.7 per cent due to a transfer of \$310,000 to other allocations, and a savings of \$285,000 from the restriction of traffic safety offences entering the fine option program.

Ms. Sarauer: — The \$300,000 number, you've mentioned other allocations. Can you elaborate on what you mean by that?

Mr. Anderson: — That's a grant that's been in one area of our

budget. We simply moved it to a different area of the same budget, so it's actually not a decrease overall. It moved from one section to another. That's the Canadian Mental Health Association grant. It's simply being paid out of a separate account in the upcoming year.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. And then the \$200,000 you mentioned for the traffic safety initiatives, can you elaborate . . . I think that's what you just said?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That was from restrictions of the traffic safety offences entering in the fine option program, so that's the amount that we're going to save.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you elaborate on that a little bit? I'm assuming this has something to do with one of the . . . a bill that you have before the House right now, but I'm curious to hear more details.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We're going to reduce the eligibility for the fine option program by removing traffic and parking offences, which will result in administrative savings of that \$285,000.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Theoretically, or are you planning on losing FTEs as a result of it?

Mr. Anderson: — There would be no ministry FTE reduction associated with that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So where are you going to see the efficiency in dollars?

Mr. Anderson: — The fine option program is funding by registrations with the removal of certain tickets from the registration process. We wouldn't be paying out the registration fees.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Okay. We'll maybe save this discussion for when this bill isn't in front of committee. It's probably not appropriate to go into it in too much detail here. I have a few comments on that, but I'll save it for a better time. Are there any programs that are seeing a reduction in funding that are in this subvote?

Mr. Anderson: — No. We made some changes last year. We did not submit any reductions to our programs in this fiscal.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes. So for example, the 20 per cent reduction in funding for alternative measures programming that we saw in the last budget, their funding is remaining, has remained stable, is remaining stable this year? It hasn't changed from last year?

Mr. Anderson: — No. Last year we centralized it between two agencies that were able to pick up the burden there. This year there would be no change unless there's a dramatic increase or decrease in the number of registrations. Again that's paid by each registration, so we don't foresee any changes. We've got no budget changes within this year.

Ms. Sarauer: — And I noticed in the ministry's plan for this year, somewhere in it, there was a discussion about speaking with prosecutions about . . . I think there was something about a

practice directive towards prosecutions, encouraging them to think about alternative measures diversions. Is that correct?

Mr. Gerein: — The referral to alternative measures is part of a program to encourage efficiencies in the justice system through prosecutions identifying the appropriate cases that should go to the appropriate direction. One of the things that's happened is, as a result of that, asking all prosecutors to be particularly diligent about making sure that each case they look at goes only where it needs to go; rather than every case needs to go to trial, what's the appropriate way to get this matter resolved in the most efficient time possible.

Ms. Sarauer: — So has that, has that work already been done with prosecutions? Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. Gerein: — It's an ongoing effort because of course we have new prosecutors coming in all the time, so they need to be encouraged to think in a certain way. We also have ongoing changes to the system. For example, we've implemented a thing called a Crown caution. It's initially implemented through *The Youth Criminal Justice Act* but it's available to adults as well, which involves something even more rudimentary or quicker than alternative measures. By using that, we then free up the limited resources available to alternative measures so they can be used for other cases. We're bringing in efficiency through the system.

Ms. Sarauer: — Great. And anecdotally that's what I've heard as well, is that the newer Crowns are sometimes a little more reluctant to make referrals to alternative measures. And when we spoke about the budget reduction last year, there was some talk about the fact that it was, that referrals were not being made as frequently as they once were, perhaps. So I'm happy to hear — I believe that's what I'm hearing — is that there is some direction within the ministry to try and improve those numbers because it is a clear efficiency if you even just want to talk about dollars in terms of how to better use our court system.

Mr. Gerein: — Yes, and just solutions.

Ms. Sarauer: — Absolutely. Thank you, thank you for that. Okay, I think I have an okay understanding of this new subvote. But things get a little bit lost in the weeds when line items change names and things get transferred.

Is there anything that I've missed in this? I think I've asked the questions, but I don't know if you would even tell me if I missed something that I should have, shouldn't have. But is there anything that you wanted to share with us about this new area, this new subvote, that I haven't asked you a question about yet?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — You know, I don't think so. I think you covered most of it. We certainly didn't put this budget together to confuse you. But the fact that we're finding some efficiencies within the ministry by bringing the two sides of the ministry together, I think has created the efficiency. So I think it's just natural that there would be some at least some initial concern about how this is being presented. But I think you got it. I think you have it.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure, okay. We'll just call them growing

pains. Moving on to boards and commissions, I'm not sad to see this, but I saw there was an increase in funding for Legal Aid for \$548,000. Can you expand on what . . . Are you planning on hiring more FTEs or where is that number going to be utilized?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was an increase to the Legal Aid Commission due to the increased federal funding and the participation of the ministry in the remand initiative. That was about a \$548,000 increase.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So the federal government has increased their funding to Legal Aid? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's right.

Ms. Sarauer: — I know we had some discussion last year about the funding model being reworked and finalized. Has that work been completed now?

Mr. Goebel: — Craig Goebel, Legal Aid. Just within the past two weeks, the formula and the agreements by which the funding from the federal government has been agreed. I don't think the agreement has been signed by the ministers, but the recommendations have been made.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. Goebel: — The additional funding that was offered in '15-16 budget for the next five years will be applied to the base amount.

Ms. Sarauer: — So as a result of the change, will we as a province be seeing more money then for Legal Aid from the federal government?

Mr. Goebel: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is it growing each year or is it remaining stable or is it being based on population? I'm understanding that it hasn't been, doesn't sound like it's been officially signed yet, but could you give us a little bit of detail as to what the formula looks like and what it will mean for the province?

Mr. Goebel: — Sure, just let me get my briefing note. So the additional funding from the federal government over a five-year period that was specified was \$88 million. It's attributable to all 13 jurisdictions so a small portion, relatively speaking, goes to the three territories. But for the provinces, most of the funding is for the provinces. A half a million dollars for the . . . a half a million dollars more for the territories, based on the allocation in the new funding model which is attributable 75 per cent to demographics and 25 per cent to service delivery.

There will be an additional actually \$332,000 for Legal Aid in Saskatchewan in 2017-2018 budget because the implementation is phased in. The structural formula that I just mentioned is being phased in by a percentage over the five years of the coming agreement to the extent of 50 per cent. So the base funding of 108 million will stay under the old formula, and the new money is being phased in at about 15 per cent over each of those next years. To the end, 50 per cent of all of the money will be covered under the new funding. All of the money.

[19:30]

Then whatever there is following, there will be further delivery of funding so that 60 per cent, 70 per cent, 80 per cent, to finally 100 per cent of all of the money will be under the new formula. And then as each agreement ends, so that in five years, the demographics and the costing for service delivery will be looked at and possibly adjusted as well.

Before you ask another question, so as it stands now we expect to get \$800,000 delivered by the federal government in additional funding to the provincial government in '17-18. And then because of the way the funding formula is being implemented, it goes down actually to \$320,000 for '18-19, then back up as the percentages increase to \$440,000 for '19-20, and then the expectation is for 1 million extra dollars provided to this provincial government for Legal Aid in '20-21. And then after that, there is a commitment for \$30 million annually in additional funding which would be, under present formula, about \$900,000 provided to the provincial government for criminal and youth.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I just wanted to add that of that \$548,000 increase, \$216,000 of that is for our remand initiative, which as you know is an important issue to the ministry.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, and I promise I'll get to asking you some questions about that. Okay, just to clarify then, it sounds like we are expecting a net increase then in funding from the federal government as a result of this funding formula change. It does sound like it's going to . . . based, if I'm understanding what you're saying, this year we're seeing a fairly large reduction. Next year we'll see a much smaller reduction.

Is there a plan to sort of even out that number? Are you planning on holding back some of that money for next year so we're not seeing a big dip in funding? Or am I out to lunch in your explanation of what that funding formula is doing?

Mr. Goebel: — I don't want to agree with your being out to lunch, but you may not have caught the nuance. There will always be more money delivered to Saskatchewan government under the new formula. There will be less money than could be because it's being phased in.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. Goebel: — And that was a conscious decision by all of the jurisdictions to phase it in slowly because some jurisdictions are less flexible, less adaptable in terms of redeploying their service delivery model.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. So it's actually more of a steady incline in funding then.

Mr. Goebel: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Has the provincial government lowered its funding to Legal Aid at all, or has it remained the same?

Mr. Goebel: — No, no there's been no decrease. Provided the funding is flowed through, it will be an increase made available to Legal Aid each year.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. And the provincial government isn't lowering its money, its funding, accordingly? It's staying the same? Correct. The provincial government correspondingly also isn't increasing their funding.

Mr. Goebel: — On an annual basis, there may be both reductions if necessary and increases. But yes, I mean a budget reduction exercise may result in an in-year decrease in funding if it happens. But this year for instance, Legal Aid was accorded some additional funding to cover the costs of increased private bar, for instance.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, in supplemental estimates. So is it intended that, for example, the increased use of private bar farm-outs that we were seeing last year, is that being built into this year's budget?

Mr. Goebel: — Yes, but with a lower number.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So the hope is that there will be less farm-outs this year? That you're going to deal with more files in house?

Mr. Goebel: — I couldn't exactly say it that way, but the basis for the farm-outs this past year was specifically to assist some offices — not all of them, but a large number of them — so that the managers could delve into managing to a greater extent rather than carrying a file load.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. Goebel: — We don't expect that to carry on this year, for instance.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Since I have you here, Mr. Goebel, I'll just ask, are there . . . What is going to be a . . . How is this additional money going to be spent?

Mr. Goebel: — At this juncture I wouldn't anticipate being . . . I can't say past this year and perhaps even next year. But we are carrying, still carrying a deficit as a result of a number of pressures including additional farm-outs for administrative purposes.

But there have also been increases in conflicts, farm-outs, and things of that nature, and we have been carrying an additional cost for what we're describing as high-cost cases with multiple accused and multiple, sadly, multiple lawyers, serially multiple lawyers. I would describe some it as accuseds seeking choice of counsel for a variety of reasons that are specious. So if we can drive those things down, we can reduce the costs. But right now those high-cost cases are unbudgetable in one sense. We can put a budget in, but we have no control over what the courts are doing in respect of court-appointed counsel and things of that nature.

To finish the answer, we can use this additional funding to eliminate the structural deficit in another year and then, as we anticipate doing that, we can look forward to utilizing the funding in whatever ways seem most appropriate.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. I understand that there are some FTEs being left unfilled now within Legal Aid. Do you know

how many?

Mr. Goebel: — I was just asking our director of finance. Two, I believe.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Are you planning on filling them this year?

Mr. Goebel: — One of them was an articling student so instead of having two articling students we're down to one this year, so no. And the other for this year is a staff person who's gone on long-term disability, and our position justification leads us to believe that we don't have to backfill that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Are you sure . . .

Mr. Goebel: — So the answer is no.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Are you sure there weren't any retirements in any of your offices where the positions have not been filled?

Mr. Goebel: — Oh, that was last year, for this year. So the retirements took place at the end of the year and they were booked for this '17-18.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sorry, so those are positions that will be filled?

Mr. Goebel: — No, sorry. That's not right. Sorry. That was two retirements, yes. And they were unfilled in this past fiscal year, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Are they going to be filled in the '17-18 fiscal year?

Mr. Goebel: — No.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. What is the reason for leaving those positions unfilled?

Mr. Goebel: — One of the positions, a lawyer position was, over a period of two years prior to the actual retirement, a diminishing workload to a point where having the retirement didn't dramatically affect the workload redistribution when that person was gone. And the other one was a legal assistant, and the work of the legal assistant was redistributed within the work of the family law lawyers. And then the family law — or not the family law — the youth lawyers and then the youth work was redistributed among all of the lawyers. This is in Regina city. Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So you're, just to clarify, you're not planning on hiring any new FTEs this budget year? You're comfortable with the workload of your current lawyers?

Mr. Goebel: — That's a general question that would probably be answered yes, but there are higher workloads in some offices than in other offices. So if it were office by office, some of them are carrying high workloads, some of them are carrying lesser workloads, but that's just where they are.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Do you have available the wait times

for clients between the time they've complete their intake and they're approved and their first meeting with their lawyer?

Mr. Goebel: — Not tonight. We're keeping track of those things but I don't have them with me.

Ms. Sarauer: — Could you table that in the future?

Mr. Goebel: — Surely.

Ms. Sarauer: — That would be great. Similarly, do you have an average caseload per lawyer that you could provide the committee? If not today, then in the near future?

Mr. Goebel: — I can do two or three things if what you mean by an average caseload is something we can define right now. There are caseloads that would be attributable to lawyers based on files opened and then there are active caseloads based on how many files are closed in the same time period. So open files, files opened by lawyers, is perhaps the easiest.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Are you tracking active cases as well?

Mr. Goebel: — Yes, but it's more difficult to do because despite all due effort, closing files is not the first priority that people have when they get into work.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Yes, I'll take any numbers you're willing to provide me.

Mr. Goebel: — We can give you all three of those kinds of numbers though for sure.

Ms. Sarauer: — I've heard, and I'm going anecdotally again because I don't have the ministry to provide me these numbers, but I've heard anecdotally that there are some wait times that are upwards of two to three months right now for an appointment for criminal law, and when we're dealing with delays in court systems and making sure that we're falling within the parameters of the Jordan principle, I'm curious how closely you're monitoring that and if you have any plans for how to address that if it gets worse in the future.

Mr. Goebel: — As part of the Provincial Auditor's review of legal aid service delivery last year, there was a recommendation that Legal Aid do a more precise measurement. And so part of the implementation of that recommendation which — I think we've talked about at the previous meeting — was to have staff enter dates that are measureable. And so that's what I was thinking of when you were asking that question earlier. So we have more precision in that kind of a number. So it's available on an office-by-office basis.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I'm looking forward to seeing those numbers, so thank you for that. Let's move on to the remand initiative. I know the minister wanted to chat about it.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — If I could just make one further comment. If you have some anecdotal information about this, we'd be happy to get that so that we could look into that information because that's important to us. I think I mentioned in the House that the decision from the Supreme Court on Jordan is important to us, but that from a time-to-trial perspective, we

certainly don't have any issues like a number of the other provinces have, and I think I've indicated the numbers when we were in the House. So I wouldn't want anyone to get the wrong impression that somehow we have a time-to-trial problem in this province because we don't.

[19:45]

Ms. Sarauer: — No, and I recognize that we're not seeing thousands of cases being applied for a stay like we are from some much larger jurisdictions, and that's not what I'm trying to indicate here. However, as we've talked in terms of innovation within the ministry, before the Jordan decision came down, that time to trial was one of the concerns that were being looked at within the ministry. And an accused's ability to have their first meeting with their lawyer, of course as you well know, does add to the time it takes to get a situation resolved.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We do monitor the time to trial. In the Provincial Court, the chief judge monitors that very, very carefully to ensure that trials, that matters get to court as quickly as possible. And so as I've mentioned before, we don't have a time-to-trial problem, but I am concerned when people, you know, make comments about the time to trial, that that undermines the confidence that the public has in our judicial system. And I just want to make it very clear that time to trial is not a problem in this province. Not that we can't do better and make it quicker, but certainly from a time-to-trial perspective, given the parameters in Jordan, we don't have an issue in this province.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. And I want to make sure that similarly we don't have a problem with access to counsel and that there isn't a significant delay in that respect. Let's move on to the remand initiative piece that you talked about, you had mentioned, was a portion of this funding for Legal Aid.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Did you have a question? I didn't . . . I just wanted . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — You had said . . . Sorry, you had said that this \$500,000 that we were talking about, that a portion of it was to go to, you said, a remand initiative. So I was wondering if you could elaborate on that.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll let Deputy Minister McFee kind of fill in a lot of the details. But as you know, we've got in some of our facilities . . . Up to 60 per cent of our population in our provincial facilities are on remand. And so that causes a significant issue for us, especially when most of those people that are in custody on remand are there for very short periods of time. So it was very important for us to try to get a handle on the remand initiative by working within the ministry and with some other stakeholders to get a handle on that.

So I think I'll maybe just let Deputy Minister McFee comment a little bit about this. This is certainly one of the more important issues that we're trying to deal with within the ministry because of the significant costs, not only to the system, but to the facilities themselves. And I know you've toured them so you know what the issues are.

Mr. McFee: — So as Minister Wyant said and as we mentioned last time, this is a significant issue with us. As you know, in Corrections we don't have the opportunity to put up a no vacancy sign, unfortunately. So when we started to do this last year when we spoke, we said we had entered into an agreement with Ontario as a copartnership to actually start to look at the phenomena of remand. That report is done.

We're now getting into implementation and how we're going to actually deal with our remand situation. So in this particular budget, we're backing up a step. We know 58 per cent of remand is 1 to 14 days, and all but 13 per cent of them get out. So in this particular budget, \$1.4 million was allocated, and it's looking at stuff like early case resolution. Certainly a pilot that we piloted in Saskatoon in January would show promising results. So I'm going to get Dr. Rector to speak at some of the results in a minute.

And then we went further to establishing contracts with CBOs [community-based organization] such as the Salvation Army in Saskatoon and Regina, for each location, availability of 10 beds per day for short-term stays; the Elizabeth Fry Society case manager for Saskatoon and Prince Albert; John Howard Society of Prince Albert, as mentioned, additional funding for Legal Aid for early case resolution.

They're looking at different ways in how we do the courts, certainly on a weekend and piloting this on a weekend, and certainly we're now on track to develop a risk assessment tool to effectively know who should be on remand so the police can use this to actually reduce our numbers in the system. I think it's very important when we talk about remand to realize it is a priority and it's an important process. What we're trying to do is right size remand or get the right people on remand and not integrate that. So with that said, as I'm going to turn over to Dr. Rector to give you a little more detail on some of the early findings and what's going on. It's quite promising.

Mr. Rector: — Good evening. Dale, Mr. McFee, had described the distribution of the money there pretty accurately, but let me just elaborate a little bit more detail on that.

So there was 228,000 to prosecutions in relation to this project; 216,000 to Legal Aid; approximately 850,000 for short-term residential. So there was a reference to Salvation Army. Funds will purchase, on any given day, 10 beds both in Regina, Saskatoon, and sort of developmental funds for Prince Albert; and short-term case management in terms of connecting people to services including some funds for psychiatric nurse services for individuals with severe mental illness that are on short-term remand.

So this sort of brings together a number of pieces of work that we've done over the years. We know that oftentimes people repeatedly through remand, there's a number of issues. It could be mental illness; that's why the money is there. Sometimes it's no place to live so that's why you have the case manager, that's why you have some flexibility on some short-term residential so you can start to work on, you know, what's the long-term plan for a person to live in.

The funding for Legal Aid and for prosecutions, as well as these other CBO services, have initially targeted weekends because I

mean the remand strategy is a multi-year strategy with many, many different parts to it, and this is the beginning. And it's meant to be very targeted in the sense of where do we think is a good place to start that we could have the maximum effect and then build from there in terms of ideas. So one of the things that was really clear was we were constantly getting a buildup through the weekend. So courts end roughly around noon, and then you get people charged on Friday, charged on Saturday, charged on Sunday. Everybody shows up on Monday — no files. Everything gets postponed for two days at least as people struggle to find out this important decision around who should stay in remand and who could be just straight released and who needs to have conditions on their release like supervised bail.

So the thought was, start with the weekend activity. And so that's the extra funding to start with for Legal Aid and prosecutions, and the contracts for the CBOs that I've identified, specifically reference their activities during the weekends as well.

As Mr. McFee mentioned, there was a collaboration between all these parties for Saskatoon starting in January to start the process, even though it was last fiscal year. But it's certainly informed what was possible. Through the data analysis that was there through the pilot, we saw significant changes that then informed the budget submission for '17-18.

But for all the weekend processes, for all the individuals in Saskatoon for the period of January 8th to I believe it's March 12th, there's sort of the group of individuals that fall into sort of the extreme category of type of offence, so severe violent offences. So there's not going to be, at that point in time, a lot of discussion around the potential of early release at that point. It's going to go through the proper processes there and likely for long-term remand.

The vast majority of the other files are what's possible, and when we looked at the total number of files reviewed throughout the weekend here, for at least Friday and Saturday, a buildup, 70 per cent were released or sentenced on first appearance on Monday. So that's a huge effect, that 70 per cent of all cases referred, where it was a possibility for early release or an agreement around a conviction or sentence, was 70 per cent.

So from that, it was two important things to observe. Number one was people that were going to be released were released but earlier. The second thing is there's a belief system, you know, since the '80s for this province, remand has increased by just under 500 per cent, and that's representative of all other provinces in Canada. We also know through independent analysis by economists at the University of Regina, there's no relationship between an increase in remand and crime rates; it's zero relationship.

So in addition to . . . So there's a belief system. It's like an administrative process that's unmoveable and what this data says is, it is. And you can't increase community safety at the same time. So I think now the discussion is and will inform the '18-19 budget is what are all the other ideas to take this effect and expand that across the seven days a week. Then we'll have the major impact.

The development of the agencies, the contracts have been signed effective April 1st. So Regina, Prince Albert, for all the CBOs that were identified in Saskatoon have all been signed and are in the process of people being hired and put in place, and Legal Aid and prosecutions identifying of the particular lawyers that would be working on the weekends. But as we develop that, we already are working on the proposals, how do we take that significant impact and increase it and have that delivered across the entire week. That's my summary.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. That sounds very interesting. I'm going to ask you a few questions, if you don't mind, about it. Just so I understand, you had said 70 per cent of the individuals were dealt with by Monday as a result of this project, or on Monday. What I'm trying to figure out is, so right now you're having docket court happen on Sundays? Is that . . .

Mr. Rector: — The legal aid prosecutions meet Sunday morning to review all the cases on Friday and Saturday.

Ms. Sarauer: — Oh, okay. So they're not meeting in front of a judge. It's not like a regular Monday court date; it's the ability for the two lawyers to get together and review the file and have a discussion.

Mr. Rector: — It's the two lawyers plus representatives from the CBOs sitting at the table because the issue . . . One is case resolution around, say, maybe a plea or something. But the other thing is, okay, is there a possibility, with these services around residential and supervision, can the person be released with those conditions?

So there is an agreement, so when they come to court on Mondays, they have a plan. And what I'm saying is, the ratio there is 70 per cent in terms of an agreement on a plan come Monday.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, right. So there's no additional court time or judicial time that's being taken up. It's the lawyers and the CBOs that are working, I guess, additional time?

Mr. Rector: — I was getting sort of two phrases there, but I believe the answer to that is yes. But I think as one goes and looks at future models down the road, you know, it begs certain questions. If certain cases are being resolved already on the weekend, why are we waiting till Monday?

But those are broader judicial sort of changes going on there that require a bigger audience and participation. I think the mood in Saskatchewan, as in other jurisdictions, is to look at these kind of models. And so it's a beginning. We recognized that it was a beginning. We knew that once we established the regional operating groups . . . There's a regional operating group in each location. So you know, there's a structure in Saskatoon. There's a provincial structure, but there's a local structure.

And when you start to do these things, you start to get feedback, and people start to have different ideas about, well wait a minute here. Why don't we do it this way? And we have a very detailed evaluation structure with both the CBOs and with the police in terms of tracking and how effective is this whole mechanism.

[20:00]

But at this early stage, it's very promising. I also would say that I'm not familiar with any other jurisdiction in Canada. All this remand impacts on every single province across Canada. I believe we're the first ones around the analysis part, but very, very much so on the intervention part, which I think is, you know, a really strong signal around the innovative nature of the justice system willing to look at it in Saskatchewan by all parties.

Ms. Sarauer: — And then just so I understand, presumably the legal aid lawyer would also have the opportunity to meet with the inmate? The legal aid lawyer would be meeting with the accused over the weekend as well?

Mr. Rector: — I can't speak to what the legal aid lawyer does or doesn't do. But certainly the meetings are at the police station, and so I know that there's . . . I don't . . . You know, maybe Craig would be better to answer that question specifically.

Mr. Goebel: — What's going on now, on the Sunday in Saskatoon, is that the prosecutor is going in before the legal aid lawyer, dealing with matters with the police and then choosing a number of files for the legal aid lawyer to deal with, in which, during whatever conversations there are in the passage of disclosure offer or discussions of either plea or release terms are made. And then the legal aid lawyer is going to the office and arranging to review any files that are pending as there may be. And then a staff member is arranging with the correctional centre to do video interviews because all of the people being discussed on Sunday have actually been remanded to Monday and are out at the correctional centre.

Ms. Sarauer: — Since I have you here, Mr. Goebel, I'll maybe ask, I'm curious to know what — and I'll be asking about evaluation and feedback — but I'm curious to know specifically what sort of feedback you've been receiving from legal aid lawyers. I know that they're unionized, so I'm not sure if a Sunday work schedule was contemplated in their bargaining agreement. What sort of feedback have you been receiving from the lawyers so far?

Mr. Goebel: — Discussions with the union have indicated that they're fine with our present protocol, which is to have a private bar lawyer doing it.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. Goebel: — And the idea is not to upset what we're already doing Monday to Friday but if, on Sunday, there can be enough of a pattern of releases that reach a critical number, then we can save. Fewer numbers will come in and then eventually we can redeploy staff members and get back to the program because it is in-scope work. There's no question about that. Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. So right now this is being dealt with by a private bar . . .

Mr. Goebel: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Thank you. You had mentioned, sir,

that out of that 70 per cent of files have been dealt with, a portion of them had been convicted and sentenced on Monday. I'm just curious to know how many individuals you've . . . what the percentages you've determined through the work you've done so far are ones that have, of that 70 per cent, are ones that are released with or without conditions on Monday?

Mr. Rector: — I would prefer to get back to you specifically on that number. I have an idea but it may not be precise.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure, fair enough. Thank you for that. I suppose where I'm getting at is if there . . . I'm pleased to hear that there is work being done with respect to the remand issue. We've had this discussion a few times, but it's no surprise to anybody that this is becoming a pretty significant problem. But I'm wondering if, in conjunction with the work that's being done with individuals who have been held on remand, if there's also work being done on the police end. Because if there's individuals that are being released within 48 hours of them being held, I'm not too sure if — and I respect the independence of the police to make that decision — but at the same time, understanding that it is the police who ultimately decide whether or not an individual should be held.

Mr. McFee: — Yes, the response to that is everybody's at the table, including the police. And I think that we talked about it last year, is we are close to double the number of breach charges in every province in the country. It's not quite apples to apples, but certainly there's been discussions with prosecutions, the police, the ministry, certainly with Legal Aid as well as, you know, a review of what we're actually breaching for, does it actually make sense?

So everything's taken into consideration now and we're actually looking at the individual. And as Dr. Rector has said, does that individual need to be held in custody? Is he a real threat to the community or is he better dealt with somewhere else? So I think what you're seeing is a lot of rigour from everybody to put the right people in jail.

And Dr. Rector mentioned that there's no correlation between increased remand and crime reduction. So the same is true, if you mix low-risk offenders with high-risk offenders, they all become high risk. So it's critical that we get this right. It's all evidence based. It's all based on data and it takes all parties, including prosecutions who have been a very, very strong contributing partner to this, and the judicial is in in the early planning stages too. So it's basically trying to realize that remand is an effective tool for community safety, but overused remand can be almost counterproductive. And what we're trying to do is get the right people in the right place.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I appreciate that. I am curious to know, you had mentioned the short-term residential portion of this project and your contract with the Salvation Army. Can you elaborate a bit on what's happening in that area of the project?

Mr. Rector: — You know, one of our . . . When we reviewed sort of the current processes, what we observed was oftentimes it's the legal aid lawyer that's trying to come up with the plan. And the plan relates to, at times, residential. The plan relates to mental health. The plan, you know, has a number of components to it. And what this structure is saying, we can

build in a structure that examines, if there's residential, that we have the residential available. And it may not be the long-term plan for residential, but it's there on an immediate basis for a number of days, by which then determine a longer term one.

The other thing about the Salvation Army, they have a contract for, you know, like I mentioned earlier, for 10 beds. But their organizational structure is much bigger than that. So they have the flexibility to also look at some of that long-term plan as a part and parcel of their overall operation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Are these beds additional beds than the ones they were already operating?

Mr. Rector: — These are beds that, within their structure, are available that are not necessarily being used at their full capacity all the time. So what we did was a purchase of bed space from them that filled in that gap of the beds that they weren't using. They didn't have to build anything to get those additional beds. It's a greater efficiency on their part and greater efficiency on our part to make those beds available for this purpose.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Now I understand what you're saying, I'm just wondering if there was any time when the shelter was already full and those spaces were being saved for individuals that were being released from remand and how the fluidity of that was working. I'm a bit surprised to hear that the shelter beds in January, for example, weren't already being used to their full capacity.

Mr. Rector: — Their capacity is greater than the shelter beds. And so it's not necessarily 10 spaces in a particular area within their building, but it's 10 spaces overall. So they don't have to be all lined up in a particular area, whether it's the shelter beds or a particular unit. On any given day, they do have 10 beds always available, and those are the beds.

So with that flexibility that they have, around looking at their entire structure, that's why the agreement was 10. And they're very comfortable with that, and they know that can be met. Is it possible in the wintertime under extreme conditions on a weekend? I'm sure that that's a different set of conditions than any other time, so I'm not trying to oversimplify that complexity of a sudden surge of demand that they may have. But both locations were very committed that this space is available for what we've agreed to.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so we're not talking necessarily about physical beds all the time? Just so I have a full understanding of . . .

Mr. Rector: — The contract is for on any given day, 10 beds available.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, it sounds like you're making a really strong ministerial case for the Housing First initiative. I don't know if the minister has any comments on that, but it sounds to me like this is a perfect opportunity for something like Housing First that would provide both the space for individuals who are clearly in high need and who require the supports that you're talking about that these CBOs are able to provide.

Mr. McFee: — So I'm fairly familiar with the Housing First, and certainly the Housing First has worked in many areas. And I don't want to confuse Housing First with what we're doing at remand, but I think we all know that housing is a staple for any individual to find some stability in what they're doing. Certainly that is absolutely the case with sentenced offenders or remanded offenders. And without that stability, what happens is we become risk averse and we put them in a jail to give them a house, and a lot of times, we're making it worse.

So using third parties to fill in this gap and using some of the capacity they have, plus some of the extended services they have to help connect these people to services, is just an absolute no-brainer. So you know, certainly the housing piece, as you mentioned, in not having it certainly could be a prerequisite to where they end up with us. But it's not always the case. But we all do know that that housing piece is absolutely something that we must fill, especially with these that are on the borders. And that's what we're trying to do here in relation to the people that we're trying to get into those services.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for that. Now you had mentioned some funding for this program is going to . . . for this project is going to Elizabeth Fry and John Howard Society as the CBOs that you are working with. Can you elaborate a bit on what their involvement is?

Mr. Rector: — Specifically with John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, Elizabeth Fry is a contract for female accused between Saskatoon and Prince Albert, and John Howard is specifically case management for males in the Prince Albert area. The case management process is working with either Salvation Army or other agencies that are of potential for emergency placements in terms of residential.

But it really is, like I'd mentioned earlier, it's around . . . rather than the legal aid lawyer trying to come up with a plan that would be suitable for the release, is that these particular agencies and individuals and those people who are contracted to work on weekends as well to work with prosecutions and Legal Aid to say, so what is possible? So Salvation Army may say, these are the number of beds that we have right today. As per our previous discussion, this is what's possible. Based on these records, this is the level of psychiatric services we may provide. Here are some conditions that we could supervise, and that type of thing.

[20:15]

So that is, for Elizabeth Fry, it pertains to female accused for those two centres, which is for the most part related to Pine Grove in Prince Albert where females are remanded. And John Howard would work closely in Prince Albert with Prince Albert Police Service where folks are remanded at police cells on the weekends. So that's where a lot of that activity would happen.

It's the same fundamental principles across three locations. And you know, we're expecting that each location is going to have some unique differences and . . . But there's sort of common principles operating here, and I think that the combination of a number of these folks coming together and looking at how might we make this more efficient, I think, is clearly going to show up.

But regardless of areas of efficiency, as Mr. McFee had mentioned earlier, I think the other issue is the volume coming in. And so there's a lot of policies that police make based on their practices around what's an appropriate person to remand. What the research involved around was what are the variables that would suggest, you know, this person should be remanded or not. That's the work that we've contracted with the forensic centre at the University of Saskatchewan.

So we're in the process of working within government to extract all the court data and corrections data going past, I believe it's about eight years, to start to look at an analysis of those variables so that the guidance to the decision making is . . . Like all the previous decisions may be fine in terms of the policies; maybe they're not. We don't know. It's a practice. We do know that a number of individuals that are remand do have just a consent release. I think that was your question earlier.

So I did find my numbers here. So it's approximately, of that 70 per cent, 50 per cent were consent release and the other 50 concluded by way of sentences. So those are two important pieces here. It's not lopsided. It's got both combinations there, so it's not just concluding by way of sentence. There's a whole group of individuals that are simply released, and I think that's the spot that it really comes to play with how screening is done at the front end. Because if a quick examination of the files say they should not be here, then why can't we do that earlier up in the system? So that is the part of the process there.

You know, it's historical practices, it's policies, and it's providing some more concrete data and evidence as to really what's the appropriate decision making that needs to be here based on the evidence. And even if somebody has some risk variables, the question is, can you reasonably manage that risk? And that's where those other services come into place. So if a person has a history of not showing up in court, can these body of services actually help to make that happen? That's a different kind of question to know the risk than it is to manage the risk within a reasonable situation. So if you're dealing with somebody with a property offence — you're dealing with somebody who has a history of disorganized behaviour and thinking and timing, and that's the issue of why we're getting a failure to appear — you know, that's a, relatively speaking, easy issue to manage.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. This is very interesting work that you're going into. Sorry to backtrack, but I do want to make it clear just in case anybody is watching so they don't get the wrong impression. Individuals that are . . . When we were talking about the shelter beds earlier, those are only individuals who have been released, so they're no longer remanded individuals. They're individuals who've been released on conditions, for example. That's correct?

Mr. Rector: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes. Thank you. You had mentioned the psychiatric nurses and we did speak a little bit about the CBOs. I'm really curious to know what sort of . . . I understand they're at the table. Are they providing counselling services, real time? Are they going into the prisons? Are they just a referral? Are they vetting? I'm very curious to know what their role is.

Mr. Rector: — Yes, I sort of said psychiatric nurses, then I switched to psychiatric services. But that's true, they're psychiatric nurses. The contracts with the Salvation Army, in the case of Regina, complements their existing psychiatric services; it adds to it. And in the case of Saskatoon, it's creating it.

So those services are associated . . . hiring staff for their agencies. And so that's part of the case planning at the very beginning is, number one, if someone has a history of mental illness and, you know, medication management, or while they're involved with the residential, there's a whole process there of evaluation of very erratic behaviour, they make referrals to the appropriate medical services. It could be emergency receiving, medical review of the medication, or a review of whether they've been taking the medication, that type of thing.

So we think, you know, based on the work that has been done, that that's an important piece that has been added. And we'll evaluate that piece in terms of the number of accused that come with those conditions and the nature of the follow-up. And that's been built into those two areas.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. How long are you planning on running this project? Is the plan for it to continue on permanently now, or is a pilot for a year?

Mr. McFee: — I think right now we are ready to continue to try to drop our numbers. We'll keep evaluating it, as Dr. Rector said. We'll keep making changes as necessary. What we do know is we can't do the same thing we've been doing for the last 10 years, because pretty soon we'll be at 75 per cent remand, like some other provinces are headed. And this is obviously one of the ways that we can start to reduce the demands.

So there's no intention to back away from this program, but there is intention to fully review, continually review, tweak, make better, and get it right. Because the reality is, we have to get this right.

Ms. Sarauer: — So following that, is there an evaluation process that's ongoing? I think you had mentioned a little bit. Can you talk about that a little bit? I'm also curious to know if any of that information will ever be made public, more specifically if I get to see it at any point.

Mr. Rector: — Sure. Absolutely. There's some multiple levels of evaluation going on here. When you start off something like this where's it's a very targeted process, you know, if you were just to look at total remand counts, you're not going to see total remand counts go down.

We have baseline measures for the province. We have baseline measures for remand for every facility. So we know what the rate of admissions, and we also know what the growth rate is, because this is not a flat growth rate. It's an exponential growth rate over the last 35 years. So in the past two years alone, remand has increased by 17 per cent for each year. So you can get a 5 per cent decrease from 17 to 12, which is a starting point, but if you were just looking at remand total counts, you would say, well remand's gone up. So the first effect from a

global perspective is, we have all the data to be able to start to measure. Are we impacting on the total growth rate of remand and by facility? So that's number one.

Number two is when we start off with a project like, let's look at the weekend. We zeroed in on, so what happened on Monday? So that's why the information that we described was on first appearance. Because if you looked at first appearance throughout Monday to Sunday, it would just be . . . or Friday, it would all be washed out. And yet there's a real effect going on there. So you know, our approach is to make a very targeted sort of surgical response. Where do we think that impact will be? So we have very sensitive measures to identify whether or not it did or didn't have an impact. And then how do you increase that?

With reference to the services provided by the agencies built within the contracts, and we work very closely with them, is exactly what data structures were going to be taken so that we not only look at impact but also descriptive statistics around some of the questions that you asked.

Mr. McFee: — I just want to add to this too to get the full picture of remand. So as Dr. Rector has articulated that we're looking at all aspects of remand, the one that we haven't talked about is we have a snapshot of about 134 offenders that have been on remand for over a year and one of them for six years. So this is a double-edged sword. We've also got to look at what's going on there. Because those people, although smaller numbers, eat up more bed days than the people that are cycling through the system.

So obviously the efficiency process and the teams that are on both of these is, when you're on remand in a provincial correctional centre, you're not getting program. And when you're not getting program, you're basically sitting on dead time. And some would call it babysitting, which doesn't have a lot of value. So this is the priority. And the minister has made this a priority for us to drill both sides of the equation. And the same teams are looking at both, including looking at with the federal government how we look at long-term remand. Because obviously most of these people end up in a federal institution.

Mr. Rector: — I'd just like to also add that we work with the economists at the University of Regina so that when we look at impact, we're also looking at impact on numbers and on individuals and quality of life and that, and making the right decisions around who should be in remand.

But there's also financial impacts associated with all of this. And there's been a lot of work done by the university and our collaboration with them around what the cost of remand is. And one of their objectives in working with them is to articulate the cost value formulas here as we march down this road.

Mr. McFee: — And that drives overtime.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, absolutely. Just so that I understand, is the entirety of the funding for this project coming out of this Legal Aid Commission line item that initially got us talking about this? And if not, can you tell me where it's coming from, where all of the money is coming from in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The 216, Legal Aid; 850,000 for short-term residential; 300,000 for short-term case management; and \$228,000 for prosecutions. Oh I'm sorry, 1.5. That's right.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sorry, where would the ... For example, where did the short-term residential fall under in the budget?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes. The short-term residential and the short-term case management is from community corrections.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Because I asked the question for legal aid, I should be fair and ask the question for prosecutions. I'm just interested to know what the feedback has been so far from the prosecution side on this project overall, and also the extra work time, I suppose.

[20:30]

Mr. Gerein: — For prosecutions, I'd echo the comments that have been made earlier, and say it's been a positive experience. One of the real benefits is that, whereas before in Saskatoon people would come in Monday morning, the files would arrive from the police Monday morning, everything would be set over to Wednesday unless it was very, very clear almost immediately that it could either be resolved or that the person should be released ... So right there, you've saved a couple of days for these people who either resolve the matter and go into the regular correctional stream and the rehabilitation, as the deputy minister mentioned earlier, or people who can be released on terms. So we've backed that up.

It's also been extremely valuable though because one of the things that we anticipated and have had a chance to do is work with the police and look at the police's decision as to who they hold. And I can tell you that the prosecution service, and the prosecutor in particular who's been involved, hasn't changed those decisions. It hasn't resulted in an observation that wrong decisions are being made here and here and here and need to be changed.

So in the first instance, to go back to what the deputy minister said, the right people are being held. However, many of them are released in relatively short order, not because they were the wrong people but because, as has also been referred to earlier, what's necessary? Do we need to keep them longer?

And into that I'd put, for example, two categories. Failures to appear, in many instances they aren't immediate risks to the community, are they? But what they are is an issue of accountability. By getting them back on track and perhaps integrated with one of the community-based organizations, we can better assure that they're going to come back next time.

Another example would be a situation of violence with someone who doesn't have a prior record. And the issue is, where can this person be located so that they won't cause future problems? There's going to be no-contact clauses and so on. Well normally that's going to take a couple of days to figure out if we start on Monday morning. But when this is done on Sunday, when there's this opportunity for review and reflection, then what happens is the lawyers can talk with each other, the Legal Aid lawyer can talk with his or her client, the

community-based organizations that are now on stream can be involved. Is there a place this person can go so they won't go back and so they're involved with people who will help them to keep them from going back or falling into whatever other problem led them to behave as they did? And we're already seeing the benefits of that in the sense that we are able to structure those releases earlier.

As Dr. Rector said, we're waiting on the data to see what happens in terms of recidivism, numbers that just aren't available yet. This is the opportunity to find that out. Does that answer your question?

Ms. Sarauer: — It does. Thank you, I appreciate that. And thank you for walking me through this program, Dr. Rector. I think it's very interesting, and I'm interested to see where it goes. I believe it's 8:30, so I don't know if you want to take a break, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — If it's all right with the committee, we will have a five-minute recess. The committee will reconvene in five minutes.

[The committee recessed for a period of time.]

The Chair: — The committee is back convened. Nicole? Yes, for questions still. Go ahead.

Ms. Sarauer: — All right. Let's move on to other budget items. I did want to ask a question around the office of the chief coroner. I noticed that they're receiving a reduction in funding to the tune of \$135,000 this budget year. Can you elaborate on where you're planning on seeing that reduction?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That was the final year of the program restructuring, was \$135,000. So that was the final year of the program restructuring that had been undertaken by the former chief coroner.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you elaborate a little bit on what you mean by program restructuring?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The original two-year program restructuring plan was to do a couple of things. It was to achieve some monetary savings, provide a more sustainable and customer-focused service delivery model, and improve the quality and consistency of services provided by qualified and experienced staff in the community coroners, and provide a timely service and allow staff to devote more of their time to the strategic program initiatives. I hope that kind of answers ... It probably doesn't answer your question, does it?

Ms. Sarauer: — Sort of. I'm still trying to wrap my head around what this reduction means. If it's a project that's concluding, maybe a better question would be is, are there any FTEs that are being eliminated within the office of the coroner this budget year?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — No.

[20:45]

Ms. Sarauer: — No. Okay, thank you. Subvote 6, custody,

supervision and rehabilitation services. Now I'm thinking some of the money that's gone up or down in some of these line items is a further result of some of the transferring that we've already talked about, or I could be wrong. In any event, I'm hoping you can walk me through each of the line items and what's happened with custody services, community corrections, and program support.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sure. Well you'll see the reduction in custody services. That relates to the inmate pay reduction. And so that's mainly for inmates who are no longer receiving compensation for certain work assignments, so they'll see that's \$600,000. You see the community corrections piece. There was an increase and that relates to the remand initiative which we've already talked about.

On program support, there's a net decrease and that's mainly due to the transfer of the ministry's strategic planning program review and Justice-related advice functions to central management and services of \$343,000, which I think we talked about before.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, sorry. Just so that I fully understand for the program support line item, is that a transferring or is that a reduction in service?

A Member: — Sorry. What was that?

Ms. Sarauer: — Program support.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's a transfer of \$419,000 to merge some similar functions. There's a transfer of \$140,000 to community corrections, and incremental funding of 216 and three FTEs for the IJMS project.

Ms. Sarauer: — Three FTEs were added or eliminated?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Added.

Ms. Sarauer: — Added? Okay, thank you. Let's speak a little, let's talk a little bit about the reduction in custody services and the policy plan to reduce pay for inmates. What was the rationale behind that decision?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Dennis will answer.

Mr. Cooley: — Dennis Cooley. Historically, custody services has provided a wage allowance to all sentenced offenders. Allowances were provided to sentenced offenders that attended programming, maintained a work assignment, or awaiting a work placement, and considerations were made for some remanded offenders who maintained a work assignment.

Effective May 1st of this year — so in two weeks or a week — wages for inmate work assignments in correctional programming will be reduced, resulting in \$560,000 reduction in our budget. So inmates will no longer receive compensation if they don't hold a work assignment or if they refuse to participate in a work assignment or terminated from or quit from a work assignment or if they did not successfully complete a program. So in achieving the new mandate, we're still able to maintain our facility operations while providing programming for offenders.

Ms. Sarauer: — So is the reduction being zero? It's being moved to zero, then?

Mr. Cooley: — No, the reduction is \$560,000, and in the budget there will still remain I think it's around \$360,000 for inmate pay. So there have been some reductions that have been reduced to zero. For example, if somebody is employed but unavailable for work, if they're ... or employable but unassigned, they used to get \$1 a day. Now they'll get zero.

We've changed the way we're providing inmate pay related to programming. So we used to provide inmate pay of \$3 a day for program attendance, and we've changed that to pay for completion of the program. So if somebody completes the program, they'll get \$10 for every course they complete. So in an offender employment program, if they complete that program, they get \$15. If they complete the dedicated substance abuse treatment program, they get \$20. And if they complete the construction prep course, they get \$25. So rather than paying them for the day at \$3 and if they don't complete they still get paid, we've switched it to more of an outcomes-based model that if they complete the program, then they get paid.

Some other jobs have been reduced from ... Sort of general maintenance or general work placements in the facilities have been reduced from \$3 a day to \$1 a day. And there are some other full-time specialized work placements — say in the kitchen or in the laundry, in outside maintenance work — where they haven't changed at all. It was \$3 a day before and it's now \$3 a day.

So we've tried to shift our focus a little bit towards outcome based for the programs, and then focusing paying inmates, focusing on some of the key areas that are essential to the operations of the facility such as kitchen workers and outside maintenance.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So what sort of problem were you trying to address in making this change? Is it simply to find efficiencies within the budget?

Mr. Cooley: — There were two issues. Certainly, I mean, we are looking for efficiencies, but we're also looking for outcomes as well on the programs, switching it to an outcome-based model where payment is based on completion of the program.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, sure. But what about, for example, you've mentioned individuals who are able to work but aren't assigned, used to receive a dollar a day and are now receiving nothing?

Mr. Cooley: — That's right.

Ms. Sarauer: — So is that simply an efficiency measure?

Mr. Cooley: — I mean I think that's a measure ... I mean, it is efficiency, and it's consistent with a number of other jurisdictions across the country we looked at. We got data back from eight jurisdictions: seven of those jurisdictions don't provide pay for programming; one does. And then three of those jurisdictions don't provide inmate pay for other jobs. And other jurisdictions have a similar model to our new model,

where they're paying for those specialized jobs such as laundry or maintenance.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, but I doubt we were known jurisdictionally as being the cushy jail system, with a dollar-a-day payment. I understand the prices for things like canteen items are higher in custody than you would necessarily find them out of custody. Is there a plan to, as a result of this, look at things that inmates are typically having to pay for out of their own pocket like canteen items, to see if those costs can be lowered for the inmates?

Mr. Cooley: — The canteen prices are slightly higher for some items in the facility than they are to the general public. But what we do have is we have hygiene packs that are available for offenders if they can't afford basic hygiene items that they require on a daily basis, and we give those out complimentary.

Ms. Sarauer: — What about for food items within the canteen? I know that, for example the noodles are quite popular. Is that all run through Compass so the ministry can't control it, or is there any plan to look into reducing the costs of those sorts of things as well?

Mr. Cooley: — Those items are provided by Compass through the canteen policy but that's . . . I mean, we are always reviewing our prices and review that on a regular basis.

Mr. McFee: — I think the point that Dr. Cooley has advised here though and I think we have to be cognizant of, is there's still the ability to earn money. It would sure be nice if we could get some of our people to take some rehabilitation courses and things that actually have, matter to not coming back and bettering themselves. So I think those opportunities such as the Courage to Change and some of these other things certainly are there. And then nobody's going to take away the hygiene products and stuff like that. But I mean the prices in relation to the canteen, those are constantly under review. But the hope is that we can get more people on the uptake in some of the programming.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there an issue in getting people to do the programming? Because I thought that the converse was true, that there were more people wanting to take the programs than were available for programming space, and often individuals were being juggled in a way so that those with a longer-term sentence might have to wait a bit longer to take the program than someone with a shorter sentence. I didn't ever think that there was a problem that there was more program spaces available than are inmates.

Mr. Cooley: — I think the idea is to create an incentive structure to encourage inmates to participate in programming and the pay based on outcomes will hopefully do that. Were we monitoring this to see if indeed there is an increase in demand for programming? The idea is to create the pay structure where we create that incentive for inmates to participate.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there a feeling right now within the ministry that there isn't sufficient demand for programs?

Mr. Cooley: — We know that there's a high demand for programming, and we want to increase. We want to keep that

demand, keep that incentive going. That's the reason why we're in this business.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there a feeling within the ministry that there has been problems with completion rates of programming?

Mr. Cooley: — No, I think the completion rates were . . . is something that we monitor. It's something that we want to keep monitoring and keep encouraging. But I don't think, I mean, typically I don't think there is a problem with completion.

Mr. McFee: — So the programming's been successful, as you've mentioned and as we've discussed. But we still have a whole lot of people that don't apply for programming. So through incentive, our hope is that we will get more people that actually apply for programming. And if that means the other side is that . . . Do we have to supply and put more programming in? Well that's Catch-22. That would be actually a good thing because the reality is is we know that the programming works and we know that it's measured. But we do know there's not a lot of people . . . or there's a lot of people that don't apply. Yet the ones that are going through the programming are highly successful.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there money in the budget for increasing programming should that be necessary?

Mr. McFee: — I would answer that we monitor that and, you know, hopefully if that's something that's a good story that we have to find money to do it, then that's something we'll have to address. But we don't have that issue right now.

Ms. Sarauer: — Well there's some people who are deemed by the facility not able to take programming, for example if they're considered a high-risk gang member or something like that. Is there any plan for individualized programming for individuals who can't take the programming as it exists now?

[21:00]

Mr. Cooley: — In the high-security areas where we do have a concentration, a heavy concentration of gang members, for example, as you said, and other high-risk inmates, we do have itinerant teachers — who we refer to as itinerant teachers — who move into those units and provide programming to those offenders right on the range. So those high-risk offenders are still eligible to take that programming and to receive wages if they complete the course on time . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Are there any . . . Sorry.

Mr. Cooley: — I was just going to say, I mean the issue of gangs is actually one in how we manage gangs, and the types of programming that we provide to gangs is important to us obviously. It's something that we're just now embarking on and hoping to develop a renewed gang strategy so that we get more gang-affiliated offenders into programming and trying to look for ways for them to exit out of a gang lifestyle.

So you know from a management perspective, it's something that we need to do just because the gang lifestyle leads to issues in our facility. But also from a correctional and rehabilitative perspective, we want to work with gang-affiliated members so

that we can hopefully move them towards a different lifestyle upon release.

Ms. Sarauer: — Are there any wait-lists right now for any programs within institutions?

Ms. Schnell: — Yes. Doris Schnell. Yes, there are waiting lists for most of our offender programs: so for our Thinking for a Change, which is a criminogenic program; for our addictions programming; our dedicated substance abuse treatment unit. There are waiting lists for a number of the programs.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. That's what I thought. Is there a plan within the ministry to increase work opportunities for inmates?

Ms. Schnell: — Well we have a training program in order to train folks for employment outside the facility. Is that what you're asking about?

Ms. Sarauer: — No, I'm more talking about speaking to this wage issue. There are certain jobs within the facility that inmates can do for pay, and I'm wondering if there's a plan to increase those types of jobs so that more inmates who are now losing the ability to get a wage can do so through work opportunities.

Mr. Cooley: — There's no plan to increase the number of those types of jobs that are within the facility. We know the number of kitchen staff that we require. We know the number of maintenance staff. We know the number of laundry staff that we require.

You know, offender employment, however broadly, certainly is a priority for the ministry. And you know, Whitespruce and the training facility are, and our other programs, are trying to . . . The goal is, in our community training residents, the goal is to try to move those offenders into paid employment on the street.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I'm only talking about employment as it relates to this specific wage issue. What about other costs for inmates? There's costs for inmates to communicate with the outside world. I believe there's a cost associated with mail, and there's obviously a cost associated with phoning. Is there any work being done on reducing those costs as well?

Mr. Cooley: — So one of the costs that inmates have is to use the Telmate phone system, I guess what you referred to. We introduced Telmate in June of 2010 in the four adult correctional facilities, and that was based on a recommendation following a series of escapes in 2008. So that telephone system is provided at no cost to the ministry, and the vendor collects revenue based on a fee-for-call system and then pays back 10 per cent of the revenue that they generate. Ten per cent of that commission comes back into the inmate welfare fund. So last year, last fiscal year, that payback, that commission that went back to the inmate welfare fund was about \$120,000 a year.

So that contract expired; the first contract that we had with Telmate expired within the last week. I think the new contract, we negotiated a new contract, and I think it became effective as of today or tomorrow. So under that new contract, the rates for calls have changed. And there will be, once the full package is

in place — and likely it'll be in the summer when the full package is in place — we'll see an overall reduction in the cost of calling for inmates.

So there's a couple of things to talk about here with respect to Telmate. One of the issues is we wanted to rebalance some of the free calls that we gave to inmates. So of course calls to lawyers, calls to the Ombudsman, privilege calls are free and will remain free. Under the old contract, we gave three free calls to all remanded offenders and no free calls to sentenced offenders — general calls to family etc.

So we've rebalanced that now and all offenders, inmates will receive one free call under the new system. So that's the first thing to talk about. And that's every inmate will receive that one free call, and that could be anywhere in North America.

The second point about Telmate is a change in the rate structure. So a local, prepaid call under the old plan was \$1.35 a call for 20 minutes. Under the new plan, it goes up to 2.50. So that's an increase for a local call. The long distance calls, however, the costs have decreased. Under the old plan, the cost for a long distance call was \$7.50 for 20 minutes. Under the new plan, it's \$2.50. So there's a decrease there.

Now the addition that we have in this new contract are some package pricing, and this is where we see an actual overall reduction in the price of calls. So if an inmate chooses, they can buy a package for \$35 a month that allows them two calls a day for 15 days. So it basically works out to \$1 a call. So the old calls, if they purchase those, the package, their rate drops from about, you know, \$1.35 down to \$1 under the new system.

So overall, the new Telmate contract provides less expensive calling to offenders because if they're . . . You know, typically an offender is going to make 30 calls in 15 days, two calls a day. So if they do that, and they purchase a package, then the cost per call is actually cheaper under the new agreement.

Ms. Sarauer: — How are you expecting inmates to be able to pay \$35 a month for a package when they make, for example, \$10 upon the completion of a program that can sometimes take, you know, four or six weeks to complete? And that's one of the higher paying options that you're leaving inmates.

Mr. Cooley: — I mean, they're making those payments now. They're paying . . . I mean, they'll be paying less once the new packages come in. The inmate, you know, they are certainly . . . Some inmates are relying on money that they receive from family members or from spouses to do that, you know, to cover out those costs. I mean, that happens now under the current structure, and I assume that will carry on, you know, as we move into the summer.

Ms. Sarauer: — With respect to the change in free calls for remand, wasn't that in contemplation of the fact that remand inmates aren't eligible to take programming, or for the most part aren't eligible to take programming, and for the most part aren't eligible to do work placements, and therefore can't make any income at all while in prison?

Mr. Cooley: — The calls, the rebalancing of the calls, so it's one free call per day for all offenders, we believe is a more

equitable measure, for all inmates will now receive one free call. And when you combine that with the package pricing, overall I think, you know, at the end of the day, I think we have a more efficient, cost-effective system for inmates.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm sure . . . and I'm curious to know if the ministry is well aware of the fact that one of the factors for reducing recidivism rates is for an individual to be able to maintain a contact with family, with loved ones on the outside. I'm not too sure how these changes align with that pillar that's clearly understood to be an important factor.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We certainly know that maintaining relationships between people that are in custody and their family members are important. But the results of the changes that are being made to the Telmate system will reduce the cost to the inmates that are within the system. So it's moving in, I think, it's moving in the right direction.

Ms. Sarauer: — For long-distance calls, but for local calls they will be more expensive. Is that correct?

Mr. Cooley: — If they purchase the package, the long-distance and local calls will be the dollar a day.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, that's assuming that they can afford the package. I understand that this is a contract with Telmate. I'm wondering if the ministry is going to be able to track the usage of this program?

Mr. Cooley: — The contract is with a company called Synergy to provide the Telmate service. And yes, we'll be able to track the calls. We'll be able to, you know, we'll be able to determine how many free calls are made, the free calls on, you know, the one-a-day free call plus the free calls to lawyers, the Ombudsman, etc. And we'll be able to track and monitor, you know, the individual calls plus the package calls.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so you'll be able to know how many inmates purchased a package probably by this time next year?

Mr. Cooley: — Yes. That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, great. I'll ask that question in the future if I have the opportunity. I'm a bit frustrated to see that this is where we're finding efficiencies, is removing a dollar a day from inmates. It seems a little on the cold side to say the least, and I still have yet to hear an explanation that makes sense to me as to why this is happening, other than it's just simply a cost-saving measure.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I think there was an explanation given. The fact of the matter is that we want to ensure that this is a results-based driven program, and I think the answer that was given was pretty clear.

Ms. Sarauer: — All right, we'll leave it at that then. Let's move on to policing. There's been a reduction in funding, it says, to the tune of \$200,000 for police programs.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The net decrease to the police program is due to the removal of the traffic safety start-up costs. There's some transfer of administration costs to the Criminal Property

Forfeiture Fund and the transformation of the private investigators security guard licensing program, which is offset by an increase for the recommendations coming out of the caucus committee on crime reduction. So there's a net \$204,000 decrease.

Ms. Sarauer: — Oh, okay. So I thought that that caucus recommendation would've come out of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] line item. That's coming out of police programs?

[21:15]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's right. The increase to the RCMP is mainly due to the provincial police service agreement. There was almost a . . . well \$1.9 million net increase to that line item, but the million dollars is in the police program budget.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. We'll talk about the second line item a little bit more. Can you share yet what these recommendations are and what they're going to mean for this line item because I've been waiting with bated breath to hear.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We anticipate that the recommendations will come out shortly. We're currently having some further dialogue within the Ministry of Justice. I know that Herb Cox had done a tremendous amount of work and had a lot of meetings in terms of where we needed to go with this, and so we're pretty excited about some of the recommendations that are going to come out. But we still need to do some work within the ministry to make sure that they're achievable within the budget that we set for ourselves.

Ms. Sarauer: — Will that caucus report be made public, that Mr. Cox completed?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Certainly the recommendations will be public. That's really the net of the report, is the recommendations.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Now the RCMP increase in funding that you had already spoken about briefly, you walked me through this last year, but that's funding for municipal RCMP policing? Is that correct? Or how does that work?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So that 1.937, which is a 1.1 per cent increase, was due to the incremental funding of 2.838 million for the cost associated with the provincial policing service agreement. And that was partially offset by a reduction of \$901,000 to the removal of the one-time start-up cost for the combined traffic safety services program. So that was the net. Give you a little bit more detail.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's a salary increase for the RCMP officers, which was retroactive to January 2015, that was \$5.676 million. There was an operational cost increase of \$3.637 million. That was for inflationary increases to operations; CPI [consumer price index] and the like.

There was a \$901,000 reduction for the combined traffic safety, those implementation savings that we've talked about. There's a

\$200,000 reduction for the DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid] BCAA [biology casework analysis agreement] expense that the ministry has received confirmation for the biological casework analysis DNA unit. The annual billing is going to be reduced from 1.3 million to 1.1. And we received confirmation for that. And there's the capital allocation program one-time cost reduction of \$6 million. I think that's pretty much it. So that was the total budget increase.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Thank you. I know this subvote also includes the safer communities and neighbourhoods branch?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Right.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you give me the number for how much is going towards that particular branch this year?

Mr. Larsen: — Good evening. Dale Larsen. The total budget for the SCAN [safer communities and neighbourhoods] program this year is 1.4 million.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. Is that an increase or decrease from last year?

Mr. Larsen: — That would be pretty flat with the exception of any salary increase from collective agreements.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. There's a plan to increase salary. Sorry, there's a plan to increase the salaries for the . . .

Mr. Larsen: — No, assuming there would be a salary increase from those . . . The majority of those people are in scope, so there could be some offset salary increase.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, okay. The investigating officers, they're in scope?

Mr. Larsen: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Oh okay, thanks. Moving on, I just have a couple of quick questions about subvote 11, capital and improvements. There was a decrease in funding, about \$300,000 for court facility land, building and improvements. Can you tell me where that money is coming from?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Sure. There's a deferral of the construction of a new courthouse in Pelican Narrows that was \$344,000, which we've deferred.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Did you say you deferred that? Sorry, I didn't catch the end of what you said.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — It's been deferred. Deferred, deferred.

Ms. Sarauer: — Deferred?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Deferred, deferred.

Ms. Sarauer: — Got you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There was an increase to the custody facility land, building and improvements that was mainly due to incremental funding required to continue the construction of a

new kitchen in Prince Albert at the correctional centre there. And there was a decrease to the office of information technology mainly due to the completion of the CJIMS [criminal justice information management system] project. That was 2.6.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right, I was just going to move to the court facility one. You had mentioned that that money is for the Prince Albert kitchen facility renewal.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Right.

Ms. Sarauer: — What about the Regina Correctional Centre kitchen facility work that's being done right now?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's nothing in the budget for any renewal of the kitchen facility at the Regina.

Ms. Sarauer: — There's no work happening to the Regina jail kitchen facility right now.

Mr. Cooley: — We're purchasing some kitchen equipment in all of our facilities, I think in Regina included, but the big project, you know, the kitchen replacement project, is in Prince Albert Correctional Centre, the men's facility there.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, because I understood that there was some work happening in the Regina jail, that there was some contractors there. Is that not correct?

Mr. Cooley: — There's no major construction there, at Regina. The major construction, the major capital project, as I said, is in Prince Albert. I think within Regina there's some ventilation work going on in the kitchen. They're installing some, I don't know if it's new vents or new ovens, but there's some renovations to the, sort of minor renovations to the kitchen. That's included in the food services equipment renewal project.

Ms. Sarauer: — What's the cost of that work in Regina?

Mr. Cooley: — The total cost of the food services initiative is 1.386 million, and that includes both Regina and Saskatoon.

Ms. Sarauer: — Can you break that down between facilities?

Mr. Cooley: — We don't . . . We know that it's \$1.386 million for the funding in Regina and Saskatoon but we don't have it broken down by each facility.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Could that be provided at a later date to the committee?

Mr. Cooley: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. Now this kitchen work that's being done, is this . . . When did this work . . . When was it decided that this work was necessary?

Mr. Cooley: — Are you referring to the kitchen work in Regina and Saskatoon or the kitchen in P.A. [Prince Albert]?

Ms. Sarauer: — All of it. So if it's different times, then I'd be curious to know when for each facility.

Mr. Cooley: — The kitchen replacement project at P.A., we've known about that for . . . We've been thinking about that, I think, for at least four to five years. Certainly I can go back, personally back to 2012, and we knew that was an issue. There was issues with the size of the kitchen. There was issues with some plumbing; issues, grease traps, and there was issues with the loading dock back then. So it was certainly on the books for, or in our discussions back then.

The other projects have been added as part of our . . . The other projects were added as part of our . . . They get put onto the list on our small cap list, small capital list, as generalized maintenance, or maintenance and renovation projects that we need to get done. I think they came on our list around 2013.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So what about the Regina renovations? Is that also 2013?

Mr. Cooley: — Yes, those would come on our small cap project list. And they came on, Regina and Saskatoon, it was about 2013 when we first started thinking about those.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, so what you're saying is none of these renovations or improvements are a result of negotiations with Compass?

Mr. Cooley: — No, they're not part of any negotiation with Compass.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. When is the Prince Albert renovation planning on being complete?

Mr. Cooley: — That project is scheduled to be completed in 2018-19.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. Moving on, I'm interested to know what the plan is within the ministry for the 3.5 per cent wage cut that we've all heard so much about.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — As you know, the total compensation costs is one of the requirements needed to address the province's fiscal challenge that was outlined in the budget. So wages are just one component of that, of total compensation. Others include benefits, pensions, flexible benefits. So there's an expectation that the 3.5 per cent total compensation reduction target will be achieved across the entire public sector. I think it's fair to say that employers and unions have been asked to work together to find those solutions, to achieve those compensation savings. And that will be done through the collective bargaining process.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. You have quite a few employees within the ministry who are out of scope. Are you planning on not implementing any changes until after the collective bargaining process is complete for those who are in scope?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Compensation for out-of-scope employees is also going to be impacted. How that plays out, it will . . . we'll have to determine that.

Ms. Sarauer: — So . . .

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — But they'll certainly be impacted as well.

Ms. Sarauer: — So it hasn't been determined yet?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — No.

Ms. Sarauer: — Any reductions that you're planning, will they . . . to be able to meet your budget targets, will they have to be retroactive to April 1?

[21:30]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — They won't be retroactive. They'll take place as the contracts are renegotiated.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Is there any, are there contingencies built in within the budget, assuming you won't be able to hit that target in a timely fashion?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There's no contingency built into this budget.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. How does this . . . Now bearing in mind the need to retain employees and the fact, for example, at prosecutions . . . I know there's quite a few job openings in Alberta right now for prosecutors. What are your plans to ensure that we're able to keep, and are your employees . . . and be able to retain them after this wage cut is implemented?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well you know, as has been mentioned before, these are challenging times from a budget perspective of the government. We have a very professional civil service and professionals working within the Ministry of Justice. We expect that we value their contribution to the ministry. I certainly do. I think, from my perspective, I think we'll be able to work through this. As I say, there's professional staff who want to continue to provide services to the people of Saskatchewan, and that would be my expectation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I agree they're very valuable, and I wouldn't want to see us lose any as a result of this cut. Is the plan to have this reduction also apply to Legal Aid?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well it's the expectation that that three and a half per cent total compensation will be achieved across the entire public sector. Of course in terms of . . . Again that will be subject to the negotiation of those contracts as they expire, so that's how that will work.

Ms. Sarauer: — What about the judiciary? Would they fall under this mandate as well?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well as you know, salaries for the judiciary and for Justice of the Peace are negotiated through an agreement that's constitutionally protected, and so there will be no impact on the judiciary or the Justice of the Peace . . . [inaudible].

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Certainly there's going to be a new commission that's going to be established. They will be aware of the financial constraints that the province has, and that will be part of our presentation package to them as we move forward, but they won't be caught in the automatic reduction.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Just to be clear, court clerks would be caught under the automatic reduction. Correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Subject to the renegotiation of their contracts, that's right.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Moving on. I'm interested to know how the ministry is planning on dealing with the ramifications of the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] closure. I do understand that there is some usage of STC services when inmates are released from custody, so I'm curious to know what the contingency plan is for the ministry.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll ask Mr. Cooley to answer the question, if that's all right.

Mr. Cooley: — So last year we spent approximately \$77,000, or a little more, for STC bus tickets. That's about 1,000 or 1,100 bus tickets, both adult and youth. And you know, the average cost of the ticket for us, we calculated was \$69. So under the Saskatchewan correctional services Act, the Act says that the ministry may provide transportation to inmates leaving custody for their home community. So there's no statutory obligation to provide transportation back to the inmate's home, but those bus tickets were purchased in that instance to move offenders back into their communities.

For youth, we typically, as part of our release plan, would either drive the offender back to their community or ask, you know, arrange for a parent or guardian to pick up the youth at the facility and transport them back to their home, just to maintain that continuity of care.

So we are looking at options for how we may, on the adult side, for how we may continue to move offenders back to their community. We have corrections staff doing prisoner transports, you know, between facilities and between communities on a regular basis, moving inmates from one facility to another, for court or for transfer purposes. So it may be an option to use those transportation resources to move inmates upon release as well. But we are certainly looking into it.

Ms. Sarauer: — So STC is closing in about a month.

Mr. Cooley: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — But there is no formalized decision yet as to how you're going to deal with this issue?

Mr. Cooley: — The inmates have been notified that STC will be closing. So they've been made aware of that. And right now as part of an adults release plan, the corrections staff, our staff are contacting families and letting them know and trying to make alternate arrangements for those offenders who are being released and need to move out to another community.

Ms. Sarauer: — You gave me some dollars figures. How many people, how many released inmates utilized this service last year?

Mr. Cooley: — It was \$77,000 and that's roughly 1,100 tickets.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. This sounds like a pretty serious . . . That's a lot of people. You're hoping that families will be able to pick up the slack, for lack of a better term.

Mr. Cooley: — We're looking at alternate ways. And certainly families would be called upon to help and the inmate would be . . . Certainly that's one of the resources, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — I think we're going to see a lot more people hitchhiking from Prince Albert pretty soon if we don't have anything in place.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'd just like to clarify a little bit because I think the number that was \$77,000 was . . . That was the number I think, Dennis. Is that right?

Mr. Cooley: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That doesn't include the \$95-a-trip subsidy that the Government of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan, pay in addition to that. So just to make it clear that the \$77,000 may be the cost to the ministry, but it's certainly not the cost to the taxpayer.

Ms. Sarauer: — Correct. But we're still talking about 1,100 inmates. Is that still an accurate number?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — If Dr. Cooley had used that number, that's the number.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And there's no money built into this budget right now to deal with the transportation of released inmates. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — That's right, but as Dr. Cooley had indicated, there is no statutory requirement on the ministry to do that.

Mr. McFee: — The \$77,000 in the budget is still there. We spent \$77,000. When STC goes, our money's still there. We've got to find a way to get them home.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, I agree. So there still is \$77,000 in the budget that was originally given to STC.

Mr. McFee: — Yes, that's correct, yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So there's still the potential within the next four weeks for a program to be created to transport 1,100 inmates across the province, released inmates.

Mr. McFee: — Right. And as Dr. Cooley has said, we're doing these transports up and down these corridors all the time, right, because people are moving from court to correctional facility to correctional facility to correctional facility. So there are some options. It's now a matter of finding the best option. But that money still exists in the budget.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. So when we're talking about the potential of using transports, we're talking about moving released inmates in the same vehicle that we would have inmates who are still serving their sentence.

Mr. McFee: — Sorry?

[21:45]

Ms. Sarauer: — For example, if this is a transport van that's typically — and maybe I'm wrong in what you're talking about — but typically moving inmates from facility to facility because they're being moved for whatever reason, or to their court date, these are inmates who are still serving their time. But when we're talking about utilizing STC services, we're talking about inmates who've served their time.

The other benefit of doing the request for proposal also had to do with raising the potential for expanding the technological abilities for audio transfer of recordings between the ministry as well as the successful bidder through the RFP [request for proposal] process. Royal was the successful — following the evaluation — was the successful bidder through the RFP process and effective April 1st has become the service provider for transcript production.

So theoretically would we have people, would we have one individual in the van who is in handcuffs for example, and then another individual sitting there who isn't? Because they've served their time. There's no reason why they should be . . . If an individual was put in, two months ago was put on a bus with the public, they wouldn't necessarily be locked up in a transport van. I'm just curious logistically how that's going to work out.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. So just . . . Sorry, you may have already answered this but I might have missed it.

Ms. Bihun: — Yes, I know.

Mr. Cooley: — I understand the point that you've raised and it's something that we've looked at, or we know that we need to look at. Now if we choose to do this — and this is still a work-in-progress and we haven't made a decision on should we choose to do that — but that is one of the considerations.

Ms. Sarauer: — Just so I understand, it was originally, this was a service originally provided by six different service providers. Instead you're going to have one service provider provide this service.

Ms. Bihun: — Correct.

And one of the things could be that the inmate is not formally released until they arrive at their destination, so that you can schedule the release so that the warrant is released when they arrive so that they are still technically an inmate on the bus. Because we wouldn't want to have a situation that you describe.

Ms. Sarauer: — I understand there are some ministry-employed individuals who also do court transcription.

Ms. Sarauer: — So theoretically they would be, instead of being released from the facility on that date, maybe the day before they're transported, and that's how you . . . It's not like you're asking them to serve more time, you're just going to maybe move the . . .

Ms. Bihun: — We do have ministry employees; however, they do not do transcription. There is a supervisor of the transcript area, along with administrative support who, as I was describing and perhaps was the part that wasn't too audible for you, who would take the request for transcripts and assign them, if you will, to the various transcript providers before. So they're receiving the requests but they are not doing production of the transcripts within the ministry.

Mr. Cooley: — Yes, that's correct. They could get an early extended temporary absence of a day so that they're released and then at their destination they get, you know, they become released officially.

Ms. Sarauer: — So it sounds like with this . . . Are there positions within the ministry that are being eliminated as a result of this?

Ms. Bihun: — No, there are not.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Okay, thank you. I'm looking forward to seeing what the ministry's finalized plan is. It's coming up pretty soon here, this deadline.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. Cooley: — Yes.

Ms. Bihun: — Fair to say that we do think, because we have an extra role that's assigned to it in a part-time capacity, fair to say that there's the potential as the administration goes down we'll be able to reallocate those hours in a different fashion, but there's no reduction.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. I want to ask a question, and it's a bit obscure but it's in relation to an order of council I just noticed that deals with a contract for Royal Reporting . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Royal Reporting. Court proceeding transcription.

Ms. Sarauer: — Royal Reporting is housed in Regina. Is that correct?

Ms. Bihun: — Right.

Ms. Bihun: — So we undertook a request-for-proposal process with the primary purpose of moving to a single service provider for the production of our transcripts. The current system, or the former system since we're past April 1st now and it was effective April 1st, our former system was very heavy with administrative burden where there was six individual contractors who were under contract, and administratively . . . I'm not sure my mike is on. There we go. And administratively that meant that internally we were needing to schedule out the work amongst multiple contractors.

Ms. Sarauer: — So they're just provided, electronically, court transcription tapes from throughout the province in Regina and then it gets sent back out. Is that how it works?

Ms. Bihun: — Right. So they're centralized through the transcription unit within the ministry and then assigned out through to Royal Reporting until such time as we're far enough along with our technology that we can do the transfer of those files electronically.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sounds good. Okay, thank you. One time in the future maybe I will have all of the questions for each official in order so that you don't have to come back and leave again. But I probably won't, to be honest.

Ms. Bihun: — It's not a problem.

Ms. Sarauer: — Don't hold your breath.

I'm curious to ask some questions of the minister about the domestic violence strategies within the ministry. I understand there's a death review committee, domestic violence death review panel that's been doing some work. Originally there was . . . Minister Wyant, you had indicated that there would be a report in the fall, and it's now been pushed back, obviously. I was wondering if you could provide a status update on where the panel is and when we can look forward to seeing their recommendations.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll get you that timing.

Well perhaps as you remember the goals of that committee were to . . . there was a review process to prevent, you know, process to . . . looked at preventing deaths relative to domestic violence, and they included identifying trends, risk factors, and patterns, and identifying possible gaps in the programming that we have within government and make some recommendations on some strategies. The interim report is just . . . is prepared and there's just some formatting that has to be done to the interim report. I understand it's going to be issued very quickly, within days. The final report though won't be issued till the fall of '17.

I can tell you that while we were hopeful that the interim report would come out sooner than this, they have been doing a lot of very heavy lifting, and as you know it's a very difficult file for anyone to deal with. And so we're grateful that they spent the additional time to get to where they're at. Regret that it's taken this amount of time, but I think the amount of time that's been put into it will be . . . will show some results at the end of the day. So I think you can expect the interim report pretty quick and then the final report in the fall.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I look forward to receiving that. Now refresh my memory as to what the future plans are for the death review panel. After the issuing of the report, are they no longer going to be doing any further work? Or is the plan that they will be reviewing other deaths related to domestic violence?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well we don't have any plans at this particular point to make this a permanent review process. We're going to wait and see what the final recommendations look like, and then I think we can make some determinations at that point as to whether or not we want to continue it. But we have no plans at this point in time to make it a permanent review process, if you will. That may be one of the recommendations that comes out of the committee, and if it is, we'll have to give that some consideration.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We know that there's other provinces, I think, that have an ongoing review process, and I know as part of the ministry's work they looked at those . . . they looked at

that work that was being done. So I guess that's the answer for the time being. We'll wait to see what the report recommends.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. And just refresh my memory. The panel, they looked at . . . Did they just look at one specific death?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There were six particular files that they looked at, and of course as you recall they were all closed files. They weren't reinvestigating the files, but certainly looking for gaps in the system to see where we can improve. And we do need to improve.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes of course. Are there any plans to create a domestic violence strategy?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We've been having that discussion internally at the ministry in terms of moving forward with the development of a strategy. You may know we're one of the only provinces in the country that doesn't have a formal domestic violence strategy.

So as part of . . . This is an important issue for the government, and I know it's an important issue for you as well. So we want to move forward with the development of a strategy. I think getting these initial recommendations that come out with, from . . . or the initial report will be helpful, but we need to develop our plan for the development of that strategy. But I can tell you that it's important for the ministry. It's important for me personally, especially after events of the last couple of days.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, exactly. I'm happy to hear that, and I'd just suggest that any work on a strategy, that the net is cast fairly wide in terms of who you would be consulting on that. Because as you well know, this affects quite a large swath of groups.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We know we can't do this on our own because there's a lot of expertise out in the community, and we need to, as you say, cast the net quite widely to make sure that we capture all that expertise and develop a strategy that's going to be useful.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. And I guess this would be my opportunity to thank you and the ministry for their quick work on taking over and passing the bill that will allow for individuals fleeing domestic violence to break leases. So thank you for that.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks for that, and as I mentioned before in the House, thanks for bringing the issue again forward. The ministry has been working hard on this issue for a long time, and there's a lot more work to be done. We are currently considering how we're going to move forward with a review, with some consultation on the labour piece. There has to be.

And I know you brought a private member's bill forward, but certainly there needs to be some significant consultation on that piece, and we're going to be working with the Minister of Labour to develop that strategy and get that done as quickly as we can. We know there's lots of interest on both sides and lots of interests to balance, so we need to be careful.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. I'm happy for that, and that was going to be my next question. So even though it could be theoretically considered a labour bill, there's still, as there should be, there's still justice involvement in terms of the development or the consultations around that.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — We need to decide whether or not, first of all, it's an amendment to the Labour Code or whether it's a stand-alone bill. So those are the kinds of decisions that we have to make, at least the process kind of decisions that we need to make. But the primary issue really is doing the consultation. Where it goes isn't as much interest to me as the process to get there.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there a time frame for when that's going to be conducted?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well we're having this dialogue with the Ministry of Labour and there was some expectation that we may be able to move forward with some consultation this summer, but we haven't . . . That's not carved in stone at this point either. There's a lot of discussions that we have to take, that has to take place within executive government as we move that forward. So that would be my hope.

You know, I think it's fair to say that this is one of those issues where we want to move . . . we don't want to move slowly. It's a significant issue in this province, but we want to make sure that we're careful and that we bring forward the right policies.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I did want to . . . I understand that the interpersonal violence and abuse program unit — and I might have said that wrong — but a branch or sub-branch of the ministry has been moved to community safety and well-being. I don't think it came up when we were talking about the different areas that had been moved in the big reorg, but can you talk a little bit about that change?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well it moved there.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Nothing else has changed at all?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — No.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. That was well worth the walk, so I appreciate that. So no FTEs gone, no services no longer being offered?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — No.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. I understand that your ministry is working on some consultations to some changes to *The Residential Services Act* right now. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Residential tenancies?

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes. Take your time. It's late.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Residential tenancies or is that . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Well I have residential services written down, but I don't know if that's right.

Ms. Selin: — Linda Selin. So *The Residential Services Act* is a very old Act and it's actually . . . We're looking at a review because it hasn't been looked at for a long time. But it's actually the Ministry of Social Services that's leading it. There are three ministries that deal with *The Residential Services Act*: one is Justice, one is Health, and one is Social Services. So it would be . . . What's started is that there's initial consultations on a high level with mostly provincial agencies and transition houses and enhanced residential services.

So it's just starting. It's a long ways to go. It's a very old Act. Part of the reason for looking at it is that it has very old language in terms of wash basins and chairs, so we want to bring it up to the modern language, but also to make sure that because it hasn't been changed for so long, that it meets the needs of people who require residential services.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, I feel less bad for not knowing what the legislation was now. Thank you. I appreciate that.

We do know there was an explosion outside the Saskatoon Court House recently. Has there been money built into the budget to repair the damage?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — There is no specific allocation. There is a capital budget line item, and the money would come out of that capital budget line item. We self-insure for these kinds of things.

Ms. Sarauer: — Oh, okay.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So we wouldn't have any insurance on it, so we would just repair the building out of the capital, small capital budget.

[22:00]

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, I didn't know that insurance covered explosions.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Yes, I didn't either.

Ms. Sarauer: — Do you know how much that is going to cost?

Ms. Bihun: — I don't have the estimate for the damage at this time, no.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. But as far as I understand there was no disruption to services or courthouse time or anything like that, correct?

Ms. Bihun: — That's correct.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. I'm wondering if the ministry can provide me the percentage capacity rates for the facilities. You were kind enough to provide it to me last year.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — For custodial facilities?

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — So I'm not sure we have those numbers.

Mr. McFee: — Yes, we have them.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Oh, well then we do.

Mr. McFee: — Are you talking about the count numbers?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — The counts?

Ms. Sarauer: — Well yes. Last year you were able to provide them to me, a percentage I think at the time. It was a point-in-count time. I think, for example, Saskatoon was at 130 per cent capacity or something.

Mr. McFee: — So PACC [Prince Albert Correctional Centre]: operational beds, 484; average daily count, 458; peak count, 495; 95 per cent utilization rate.

PGCC [Pine Grove Correctional Centre]: 158 operational beds; 175 daily count; 214 peak count; 111 per cent utilization.

SCC [Saskatoon Correctional Centre]: 434 operational beds; 430 average daily count; peak is 469, for a 99 per cent utilization.

RCC [Regina Correctional Centre]: 764 operational beds; 668 average daily count; 727 peak count; 87 per cent utilization rate.

And this is as . . . December 31st?

Mr. Cooley: — Fiscal year.

Mr. McFee: — Or sorry, end of the fiscal, March 31st. And then White Birch: 18 operational beds; 12 average daily count; 20 peak count; 66 per cent utilization rate.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you for that. Now we had done some . . . When we did supplemental estimates a few months ago, there was some space that had to be turned into living quarters because of the influx of inmates. Now I'm just wondering if any of that space has been converted back to the gym and programming space and cultural spaces that they were, or if they're still being used as dorms.

Mr. McFee: — You know, we had obviously a fairly long list of contingency beds, but we'll have to check and see. So that's 348 contingency beds, and we're currently using up to 42 of them. Is that correct?

Mr. Cooley: — At Pine Grove.

Mr. McFee: — At Pine Grove.

Mr. Cooley: — And we're using . . . All of those are still open.

Mr. McFee: — But most of them are still open. Is that correct?

Mr. Cooley: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Sorry, I can't quite wrap my head around the numbers you just gave me.

Mr. McFee: — Okay. You know what, I'll get Dennis to walk through where we have all these . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay.

Mr. McFee: — And then what we're using . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you.

Mr. McFee: — And then you'll understand it better.

Ms. Sarauer: — And when you're talking about beds, I'm also curious to know, in terms of spaces, like when we're . . . Beds are different in different places. For example, when we did the supplemental estimates, we were talking about converting space that wasn't meant to be dorms into dorms. And in one instance it did mean that the individuals in those dorms did not have ready access to bathrooms. So I do want to have those, that type of information provided as well.

Mr. Cooley: — Sure. So at Prince Albert Correctional Centre . . . Let me just back up. The 348 contingency beds are there to deal with sudden influxes in count. So we have, as of March 31st, 2017, we have what we refer to as 2,035 operational beds. So those are the operational beds that we rely on on a regular basis. Then we have the 348 contingency beds, so that gives us a total of 2,383 beds. So our peak count last year was — the actual day was October 24th, 2016 — and we had 2,006 inmates altogether. So we have 2,035 operational beds and 2,006 was our peak count.

So on the whole, we have, system wide we have enough operational beds to cover our count. However at a facility level obviously we have to . . . You need that flex and to use those . . . That's why we have those contingency beds. So at PACC we have two classrooms, classroom pod 1 and classroom pod 2. Each of those classrooms can hold 20, a count of 20 beds. So that's 40 contingency beds at PACC. Yes, these are all in use. Those beds are currently in use.

At Pine Grove we have the gym dorm and Sharber unit. Sharber unit used to be the cultural centre that we converted back into housing. So for a total, we have 20 beds in the gym and 24 in Sharber.

At SCC we have units A, B, and C, which are contingency beds for 24. That provides 24 beds. Unit D provides 16. Overflow dorm provides 30, overflow 2 and 3 is 10, overflow 4 is 20, remand eight, secure has seven, and urban camp has five. So those are units where we add additional beds.

At RCC we have units 3 A, B, C, and D that have 37 additional beds; unit 4 A, B, C, and D have 39 beds; unit 5 and 6 adds 40 beds. And then we have the availability of using the unit 7, which houses our dedicated substance abuse treatment unit, for 30 beds. But we don't use that as contingency space now. We keep that for programming.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. Are any of those units that you're talking about, do any of them require escorts to be able to use the washroom? Are there any units that don't have open access to bathrooms?

Mr. Cooley: — We had a situation in Saskatoon in one of our overflow dorms which didn't have a bathroom and we've

recently installed a bathroom there. But there are two of the units at PACC still require escorts.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. Is there any plan or is there any work in place to either also build bathrooms in those units or to de-utilize those units as dorms?

Mr. Cooley: — At this point we're monitoring the situation. Our hope is that through the remand initiative and some other initiatives, you know, other related initiatives, that we can lower the count so we don't actually have to use those spaces, those classrooms as contingency space, and we can return them to their built purpose, purpose built for classrooms.

Ms. Sarauer: — Great, thank you.

Mr. McFee: — Approximately 50 per cent is remand.

Ms. Sarauer: — Right. I'm curious to know what your numbers are right now for individuals who are on segregation, both administrative segregation and disciplinary segregation. How many and average length of stay?

Mr. McFee: — How long, you said?

Ms. Sarauer: — How many and how long, yes.

Mr. Cooley: — So we took a snapshot of inmates on admin segregation by facility. That snapshot was taken April 13th, 2017. So in Regina we had 37 inmates on admin seg. The average days on seg at that facility were 29, so an average of 29 days on seg. At Saskatoon on that day, we had 32 inmates on administrative segregation, and the average days on administrative segregation was 23. At Prince Albert, we have 23. The Prince Albert Correctional Centre, the men's facility, we have 23 inmates on admin seg, and the average days on admin seg at that facility is 43 days. And at Pine Grove we had three inmates on admin seg, and the average days on admin seg was three.

Ms. Sarauer: — What about disciplinary segregation?

Mr. Cooley: — I just have it provincially. We have 34. On April 13th of this year, 2017, we have 34 inmates provincially on disciplinary segregation, and the average number of days is four.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you.

Mr. Cooley: — Sorry, I do have it by facility if you'd like.

Ms. Sarauer: — Sure.

Mr. Cooley: — At Regina, the number of inmates on disciplinary segregation was 13, and there was an average of four days on disciplinary seg. In Saskatoon, Saskatoon Correctional Centre, 14 inmates were on disciplinary segregation, and they averaged four days on that status. At Prince Albert we had four inmates on disciplinary segregation for an average of five days, and at Pine Grove three inmates on disciplinary segregation for an average of three days.

Ms. Sarauer: — In the snapshot that you took do you have the

number of . . . I'm curious to know the longest individual on administrative seg, for how long that individual has been placed there for.

Mr. Cooley: — I don't know precisely, have the number of days that the longest serving inmate on administrative segregation has been, but I do know that there was one offender at PACC who had served 200-plus days on administrative segregation.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is that offender still serving, still on administrative segregation?

Mr. Cooley: — As of April — this is a snapshot of as of the 13th — we know that it had been over 200 days.

Ms. Sarauer: — And that individual is no longer on administrative segregation?

Mr. Cooley: — That I don't know, but I just have the information as of April 13th. So on that day, that inmate was there.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, okay. How often are those placements reviewed?

Mr. Cooley: — We're in the midst now of revising our administrative segregation policy, and I mean this is part of a . . . We're working with our partners across jurisdictions, and in fact we're taking the lead on this with our corrections colleagues in other jurisdictions.

The new policy that we're working on, there'll be a review panel after two days — that's someone who is on admin seg — and then after every seven days thereafter, there'll be a review, and the reviews will escalate. So the first seven-day review is the original panel that provided or that authorized the administrative segregation. So they do that at seven days. That panel then will do another review at 14 days. At 21 days, the director of the facility will do a review. And then at 28 days, the director does a review, and then each review from 35 days onwards is done by central office.

[22:15]

And the purpose of the review is to ensure that the inmate . . . is to determine whether or not the inmate is required to stay at administrative segregation. We want to look at . . . We're developing reintegration plans so that that reintegration plan . . . At the facility, the case manager will develop that reintegration plan and look for strategies to reintegrate that offender back into the general population, and then that reintegration plan will be reviewed at each stage to determine whether or not . . . to make sure that, as a check, to make sure that all steps are being taken to reintegrate the offender back into the general population.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. The average time spent in segregation seems a bit high. I've heard it . . . I know that there is recommendations within the United Nations that say anything more than 13 days is problematic from a human rights perspective. What work is being done within the ministry to address lengthier stays in segregation, both administrative and disciplinary, understanding that those two streams have very

different challenges associated with them?

Mr. Cooley: — So we recognized the need to revisit our administrative segregation policy. So it was I think about a year and a half, two years ago, we struck a committee to look at how we manage administrative segregation. There were a number of issues that we looked at, and these are issues that all jurisdictions across Canada are looking at.

And the first is ensuring that segregation is used appropriately, that it's used for a specific, defined, purposeful reason and not used as a means of avoiding dealing with an inmate who is displaying problematic behaviour. You want to use admin seg as a last resort.

We also wanted to look at limits on the length of stay, and having to address that issue I think that you just raised. We wanted thoroughly to look at the need for oversight and a check beyond the facility level to ensure that the person is . . . if a person remains in administrative segregation there is a valid reason for that individual to be there. We don't want inmates to get lost in admin seg.

A fifth issue is looking for alternatives to admin seg for inmates with mental health and cognitive problems. So you know, that's certainly something we want to avoid is using it, administrative segregation, to deal with a mental health issue. We want to find out alternate ways.

And the sixth issue is looking at standards related to the conditions of confinement for segregated inmates. So in each of our facilities we want to make sure that when an individual is on administrative segregation that the conditions of confinement are consistent. So that includes the amount of out-of-cell time, access to canteen, access to programming, etc.

So those are the six issues that we looked at. We've worked through these issues and we're now at the stage of developing a policy framework. And those reviews that I mentioned earlier, those aren't yet in our policy. But that's the direction in which we want to go is to develop, and we're working through our . . . Our policy staff are working with our custody directors and senior management team to work through some of the issues and write up that, finalize that policy so that we can have that in place in the near future.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay, thank you. I look forward to seeing the implementation of that policy.

Is the ministry tracking wait times for inmates to be able to access mental health services? You talked a little bit about administrative segregation, how that's being used to help individuals with some severe mental health issues. And I know there's sometimes a bit of a delay in terms of getting access to psychiatric care and medication as well as counsellors, separate and apart from the nursing services that are provided within corrections. So I'm wondering if that's being monitored and if there's any work being done to improve that.

Ms. Schnell: — Yes, so currently now we can only track all of that manually, so we can track it on patient files. But we are doing some work around our new automated CJIMS system where we'll be able to actually pull all that information off.

We'll be able to track wait times and pull it off in an automated fashion. So right now there's just a manual way to do that.

Ms. Sarauer: — Are you doing that work manually then right now? Could you provide us with some information as to what the wait times are?

Ms. Schnell: — We've been doing it in snapshots. So we did a custody services review over the past year, and we did pull some information off at that point. So we could provide you with the information that we pulled at that time.

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes, that would be great. I'd appreciate that, thank you.

Being cognizant of the time, I did want to ask a couple of questions from the Office of Residential Tenancies. I see Mr. Beck is way in the back. I think he might have thought he was going to get away scot-free, but I did want to ask a couple questions about ORT [Office of Residential Tenancies], caseload numbers, and how things are going in that very busy office.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Shoot away.

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm curious to know what the caseload numbers are like right now at the office. I believe when we met last year, there was an uptake, that you were experiencing an increase in volume but your ever-expedient office was handling it. What sort of situation is the office in right now?

Mr. Beck: — The numbers for this year were decreased slightly from last year. Last year the total number of applications was 8,475, and it was 8,336 this year, which is a modest decrease.

Ms. Sarauer: — Now I know there's been some work with dispute resolution in your office. I can't remember if it's already been implemented or if it hasn't happened at all, or I'm just making this up because it's 10:30. But is a result of some of the change in numbers, the slight decrease, because of some of the work that's happening at the front line?

Mr. Beck: — I'd certainly like to think so. There is a project to automate the office and that would greatly improve our ability to track statistics, which will help with the management and see what works, and measure what works and what doesn't.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there any work happening right now at the ORT office about dispute resolution?

Mr. Beck: — Sorry, about online . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — Yes.

Mr. Beck: — Yes, the system that's being created, we need to manage our cases better, so it's a case-management system that's being built. But there are some aspects of it that are being designed specifically to tie into future online dispute resolution.

Parties will upload their evidence, the documents they want, to the new system online. And that will be accessible so that people can see what the evidence is — and with a little luck, that will make them see the writing on the wall in some cases

— and with the assistance of front-line staff who have some training in dispute resolution, whether it's a chat or an email or other means, to try and encourage them to find ways to resolve issues without taking them to a hearing officer.

Ms. Sarauer: — If there is a movement to move the things that you just talked about online, is there a plan for your office to have computer portals for individuals to utilize?

Mr. Beck: — Yes, in fact they're installed in Regina and ready to be installed in Saskatoon. Because when we do go online, we will have people walk into the office and need access.

Ms. Sarauer: — Absolutely. Awesome. I'm happy to hear that. Thank you so much.

Mr. Beck: — Thank you.

Ms. Sarauer: — I am curious to know, I understand there's been some work done to — I can't think of a better way of saying it — but to follow inmates who are released after they complete the community training residence program, as well as some of the employability programs like White Birch. I believe there was some work being done to, as best as possible, track, see where they're at one month out of custody, three months out of custody, six months out of custody. I might be a little bit off on the numbers but I believe that that project has been in the, at least has been about a year-ish. I'm wondering if there's any updates that can be provided to the committee on that work.

Ms. Schnell: — So in terms of the training that we provide at Whitespruce, it is difficult for us to follow up when people are finished their . . . post-disposition, when they're finished their sentence.

However, with the construction worker program that we have there, there are three community-based organizations that are funded by the economy in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina — Choices, Bridges, and the name of the third one, I think it's called Work Prep in Regina. They actually can help place those offenders that have done the training in jobs. So we are trying to track outcomes through those organizations. It's easier for those organizations to track offenders post-release than us. Typically, they're not really wanting to stay in touch with us as Corrections, but if there's a community-based organization that's helping them in job placement, they're typically more willing to stay in touch that way.

But we don't have . . . I don't have numbers we can report yet, but that's our attempt to track that way. And the same with the CTRs [community training residence], I think you had mentioned them as well. We do have sort of a tracking sheet that we're trying to follow, you know, using community-based organizations where we can. So once we have a chance to . . . We need a little bit of time post-disposition while they're in the community to see how well we're able to do that tracking.

Ms. Sarauer: — Is there a time frame for when you think you'll be able to either determine whether or not you're able to track it or whether or not it's feasible?

Ms. Schnell: — Probably in about a year's time, I think is what we're . . .

Ms. Sarauer: — In about a year's time?

Ms. Schnell: — Yes.

Ms. Sarauer: — Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that. I think, being cognizant of the time, I'll probably wrap up. I will take this opportunity to thank the minister for answering my questions, and his officials, the deputy minister, and all the officials that were here tonight. I appreciate it. I apologize if I didn't ask a question of your particular area. I tried to catch as many of you as I could, so I apologize if I didn't.

But thank you again for coming. As both the minister and I had said, your work is very much valued. And again thank you to the minister for his time and to the members of the committee and to the Chair.

The Chair: — Any closing remarks?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Just to say thank you, Mr. Chair, and the committee for their patience. And I also wanted to simply thank the officials who have given their evening again to us tonight. We're very, very proud of the work that they do every day. And I think you can all agree that the ministry is in very good hands, notwithstanding their minister.

So I also really want to just extend a special thanks to Deputy Minister McFee and Deputy Minister Gardner for their support and their counsel. I thank Ms. Sarauer for her very respectful comments and her leadership on a number of files, and Hansard for their attendance tonight. So thank you very much.

The Chair: — And thank the member for her questions. It was a good four hours of work. So now I will ask a member for a motion of adjournment. Ms. Heppner has moved that we adjourn committee tonight. Is all in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Agreed. This committee now stands to the call of the Chair. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 22:30.]